

THE LITTLE-KNOWN MAN WHO HAS SAVED MILLIONS OF LIVES

The Atlantic Monthly

JANUARY 1997

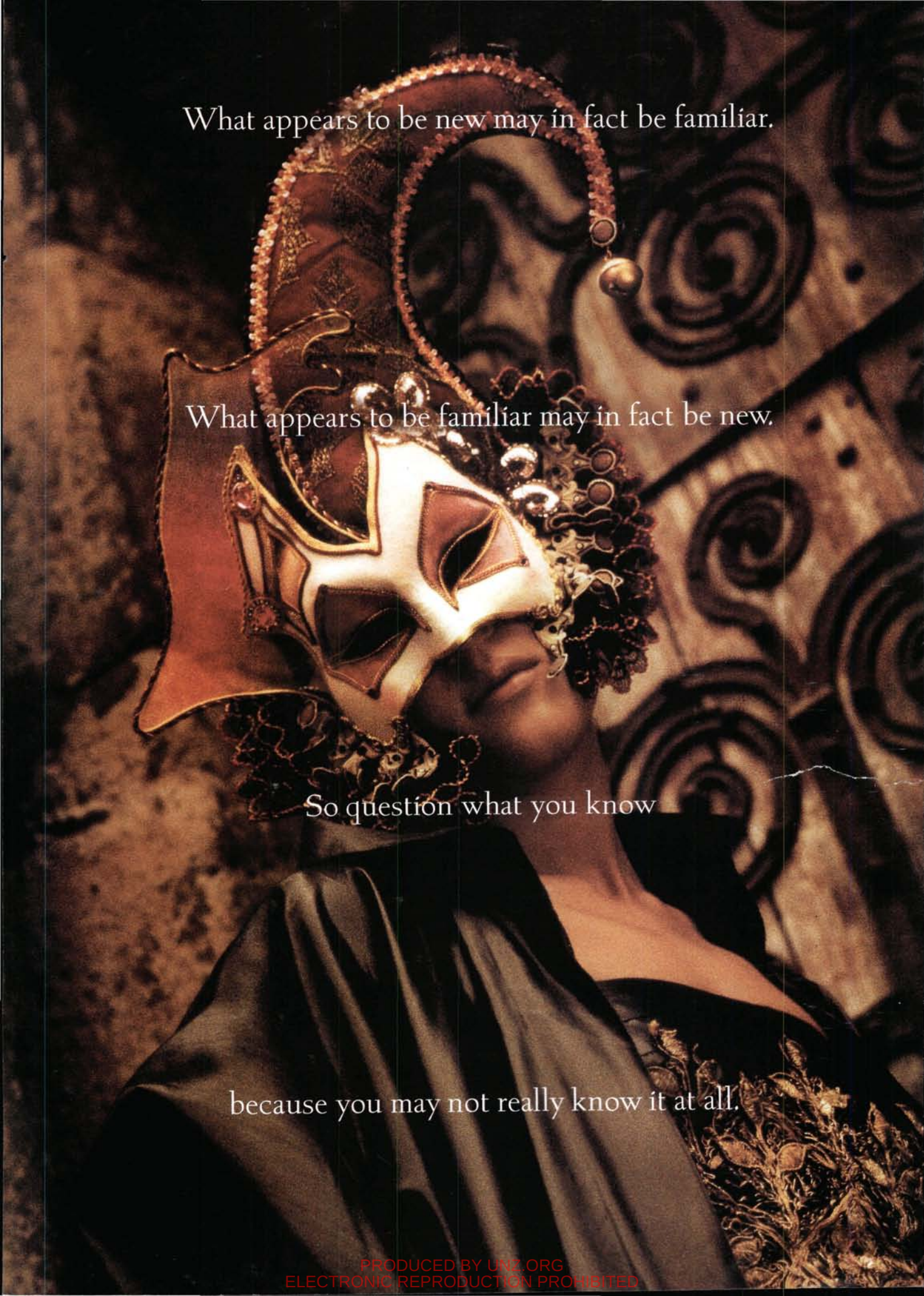


by ANTHONY KING

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What appears to be new may in fact be familiar.

What appears to be familiar may in fact be new.

So question what you know

because you may not really know it at all.

The Atlantic Monthly

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Many of the world's languages are beleaguered. Here is a survival strategy for one of them, now that it seems ready to come out from behind its Maginot Line.

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We say "embargo," they say "blockade"—but semantics aside, two facts emerge: First, the Cubans have coped surprisingly well with recent economic crises and tighter U.S. sanctions. Second, with American companies looking on, the rest of the world has been eager to do business in Cuba.

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The words "public housing" virtually epitomize what went wrong decades ago with major aspects of urban social policy. Today, quietly, low-income housing has become a showcase for what communities are doing right.

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America's never-ending election campaign—a phenomenon unknown in any of the world's other democracies—keeps politicians vulnerable, frightened, and preoccupied, and makes it hard for government to deal with the country's most pressing problems. Americans often complain that the system is not sufficiently democratic. In truth, the author writes, it may be *too* democratic.

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His name means nothing to most Americans, but Norman Borlaug and his farming methods have in the course of half a century kept starvation at bay for hundreds of millions of people in Asia and Latin America. Some environmentalists now ask, Can't this man be stopped?

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American composers have long gazed inquiringly upon Charles Ives—and seen images of their own choosing reflected back. In the course of his rediscovery of the composer, the author finds that "the mythological Ives is a trickster god."

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77 NORTH WASHINGTON STREET

WE warmly recommend two new books that grew out of *Atlantic Monthly* articles: *Fixing Broken Windows*, by George L. Kelling and Catherine M. Coles, published by The Free Press, and *The Divorce Culture*, by Barbara Dafoe Whitehead, published by Alfred A. Knopf.

Fixing Broken Windows originated in our March, 1982, cover story, "Broken Windows." That article was written by Kelling and James Q. Wilson, who has contributed a foreword to the book. "We used the image of broken windows," Wilson writes, "to explain how neighborhoods might decay into disorder and even crime if no one attends faithfully to their maintenance." "Broken Windows" was a cogent argument for emphasizing "order maintenance" to prevent crime; the ideas it contained became the template first for the New York City Transit Authority's efforts to restore order to the subway and then for the New York City Police Department's new community-policing strategy.

The Transit Authority achieved success only after a frustrating ordeal of persuasion and step-by-step implementation (which Kelling, a criminologist at Rutgers University, and Coles, of Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government, describe in the book). The transit police were skeptical. "Where in the hell did you ever get the crazy idea

that disorder was police business?" one patrol officer shouted at Kelling. "Our job is fighting crime." Yet the public liked the new stress on order—liked graffiti-free subway cars, for example—and the strategy caught on. Mayor Rudolph Giuliani credits it with helping New York City to achieve the dramatic reductions in crime that have made headlines—and has graciously acknowledged *The Atlantic's* role.

The Divorce Culture grew out of "Dan Quayle Was Right," *The Atlantic's* April, 1993, cover story—an article that, as the book's publisher says, "ignited a media debate on the effects of divorce that rages still." No article we have run in years has generated as much comment as Whitehead's. In *The Divorce Culture*, a wholly original work that goes well beyond the article, Whitehead uses history, literature, psychology, economics, and political theory to challenge the idea of divorce as "an individual right and freedom to be exercised . . . without due regard for other stakeholders in the marital partnership." *The Divorce Culture* is bound to be one of the most passionately argued-over books of the new year.

One final note: As we were going to press, we were pleased to learn that James Carroll's *An American Requiem*, which appeared in excerpted form in our pages last April, had won the 1996 National Book Award for nonfiction. —THE EDITORS

CONTRIBUTORS

Dick Allen ("The Litany of Disparagement") is the author of *Flight and Pursuit* (1987). His most recent book, *Ode to the Cold War: Poems New and Selected*, will be published this spring.

Guy Billout ("Regulation") has received many awards for his magazine and advertising work, including gold and silver medals from the Society of Illustrators. He has also written and illustrated many children's books, the most recent being *Journey* (1993). He is a regular contributor to *Le Monde*, in Paris.

Gregg Easterbrook ("Forgotten Benefactor of Humanity") is a contributing editor of *The Atlantic*. His most recent book is *A Moment on the Earth: The Coming Age of Environmental Optimism* (1995). He was named a Fulbright Fiftieth Anniversary Distinguished Fellow this year. Easterbrook lives in Brussels.

Joy Gordon ("Cuba's Entrepreneurial Socialism") teaches political philosophy

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Anthony King ("Running Scared"), a political scientist who teaches at the University of Essex, and an elections analyst for the British Broadcasting Corporation, is a regular contributor to *The Economist*. His article in this issue of *The Atlantic* is adapted from his book *Running Scared: Why America's Politicians Campaign Too Much and Govern Too Little*, to be published by Simon & Schuster this month.

Richard McGuire (cover art) is an illustrator whose work has appeared in *The New York Times Book Review*, *The New Yorker*, and other publications. He is the designer of his own line of toys and the author and illustrator of *The Orange Book* (1992), which won a gold medal from the Society of Illustrators, *Night Becomes Day* (1994), and *What Goes Around Comes Around* (1995).

David Schiff ("The Many Faces of Ives") is a composer and a professor of music at Reed College, in Portland, Oregon.

Akhil Sharma ("Cosmopolitan") is a student at Harvard Law School. His story "If You Sing Like That for Me," published in the May, 1995, *Atlantic*, appeared in *The Best American Short Stories* (1996) and *Prize Stories 1996: The O. Henry Awards*.

Alexander von Hoffman ("Good News!") is currently a fellow at the Joint Center for Housing Studies and the Taubman Center for State and Local Government at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government. Von Hoffman is the author of *Local Attachments: The Making of an American Urban Neighborhood, 1850 to 1920* (1994), and is at work on a history of housing reform in the United States.

Geoffrey Wheatcroft ("The Most Eminent Victorian") is a columnist for *The Daily Express* of London. His most recent book, *The Controversy of Zion* (1996), won a National Jewish Book Award.

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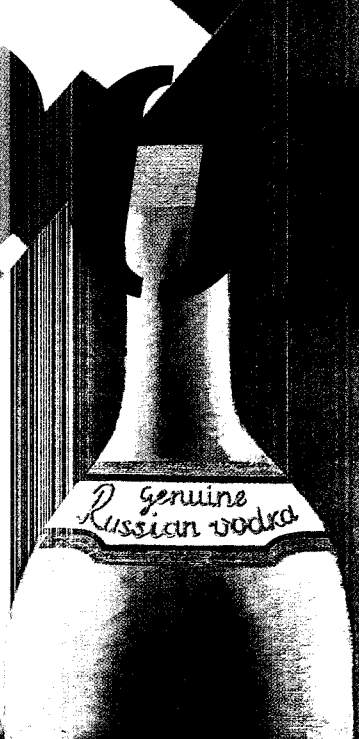
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LETTERS

The Jefferson Image

Conor Cruise O'Brien ("Thomas Jefferson: Radical and Racist," October *Atlantic*) misappropriates my work, specifically *The Jefferson Image in the American Mind*, to argue his case. Scholars who stick to their knitting live in dread of political pundits who distort, oversimplify, and wrench from context the intricate analysis of complex subjects. Unfortunately, O'Brien has not read my biography, *Thomas Jefferson and the New Nation*, or perhaps any other, which might have imparted some historical understanding to what is really, to pick up his Burkean phrase, "wild gas." Jefferson is a huge subject, of course. His legacy in America has been winding, confused, and controversial, and has often been used in causes he would not have approved; yet he—or rather his life, thought, and purposes—survived all that, and we have the Jefferson Memorial to prove it. It will survive O'Brien's assault as well.

The central idea that Jefferson was the prophet of a "civil religion" is mistaken. He never used that concept, nor did it have any existence in his mind. He had a civil creed, of course—the one encapsulated in the second paragraph of the Declaration of Independence. But it was purely secular and not to be confused with religion as he understood it. Anyone who reads the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom, along with Jefferson's other writings on the subject, must understand his aversion to the idea. Curiously, O'Brien makes no reference to the Virginia Statute or its ramifications in Jefferson's thought; indeed, he even omits it in his allusion to Jefferson's epitaph. The slipperiness of the concept as a historical tool is suggested by O'Brien's interjection of Alexander Hamilton, of all people, into the center of American civil religion.

In portraying Jefferson as a wild and fanatical Jacobin, O'Brien is simply

copying the Federalists—Hamilton in the lead—who fought him politically in the 1790s and whose dark image was dispelled in the course of history. Now O'Brien seeks to revive it as part of some obscure Burkean agenda antagonistic to the Enlightenment and the democratic revolution that Jefferson represented and that have individually or together always found in Jefferson a powerful and inspiring historic symbol.

The idea that Jefferson was a racist (a theme beaten to a pulp during the past forty years)—that his democracy has no place for American blacks and that the Ku Klux Klan along with South African apartheid are ideologically descended from him—is part of the agenda. O'Brien's discussion of this matter is intemperate, uninformed, and deaf to historical realities. What Jefferson was capable of doing about slavery in his time and what he would do about blacks in ours, given his mandate to "keep pace with the progress of the human mind" and his fundamental values and goals, are altogether different things. As Lincoln said of Jefferson and the Founders generally,

They meant [in the Declaration of Independence] to set up a standard maxim for free society, which would be familiar to all, and revered by all, constantly looked to, constantly labored for, and even though never perfectly attained, constantly approximated, and thereby constantly spreading and deepening its influence, and augmenting the happiness and value of life to all people of all colors everywhere.

Merrill D. Peterson
Charlottesville, Va.

Was Jefferson a racist? Several remarks in his *Notes on the State of Virginia* suggest that he held views that we would today term racist, and rightly condemn. These views he advanced "as a suspicion only," and not as a settled conviction. In a letter to Benjamin Banneker—a black as-

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tronomer and mathematician much admired by Jefferson, who had him appointed official surveyor of the District of Columbia—Jefferson wrote,

No body wishes more than I do to see such proofs as you exhibit, that nature has given to our black brethren, talents equal to those of the other colors of men, and that the appearance of a want of them is owing merely to the degraded condition of their existence, both in Africa and America [August 30, 1791].

In a letter to Henri Gregoire (February 25, 1809) Jefferson expressed further doubts about his earlier views on race:

No person living wishes more sincerely than I do, to see a complete refutation of the doubts I have myself entertained and expressed on the grade of understanding allotted to them by nature. . . . My doubts [in the *Notes*] were the result of personal observation on the limited sphere of my own state [Virginia] where the opportunities for the development of their genius were not favorable.

Jefferson added that *even if* one individual or race were more intelligent or talented than another, that fact would carry no moral or political weight: "Their degree of talent . . . is no measure of their rights. Because Sir Isaac Newton was superior to others in understanding, he was not therefore lord of the person or property of others."

Joyce Appleby
University of California
Los Angeles, Calif.

Terence Ball
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, Minn.

Two hundred years from now historians will be writing about Gandhi and Mother Teresa. If they approach their subjects as O'Brien did Jefferson, Gandhi will be characterized as shiftless and seldom employed, and Mother Teresa will be remembered as a self-serving social irritant.

Alfred C. Viebranz
Greenwich, Conn.

I strongly empathize with Conor Cruise O'Brien's attack on the Jefferson cult and applaud his way of assembling the evidence. But I believe he erred in accepting the common belief that Jefferson

probably fathered the children of his slave Sally Hemings. In a 1977 deconstruction of the Jefferson legend, John Chester Miller convincingly assembled evidence pointing to the conclusion that one or both of Jefferson's visiting nephews sired the children whom Jefferson manumitted in his will.

For those interested in the sources and not only the consequences of Jefferson's radical beliefs about white male freedom and black inferiority, Miller's book, *The Wolf by the Ears: Thomas Jefferson and Slavery*, is well worth reading.

LeRoy Martinson
Valparaiso, Ind.

Conor Cruise O'Brien replies:

Merrill D. Peterson claims that I misappropriate his work to argue my case. I have neither misappropriated nor appropriated Mr. Peterson's work. I quote from it, in several places, sometimes with agreement, sometimes with disagreement. I don't know which annoys Mr. Peterson more.

Mr. Peterson says that Jefferson's "life, thought, and purposes" survived various distortions, and "we have the Jefferson Memorial to prove it." Do we? I show in my book that the inscription on the Jefferson Memorial is itself a major and impudent distortion, since it quotes Jefferson's contention that the slaves "are to be free" while omitting the immediately following statement: "Nor is it less certain that the two races, equally free, cannot live in the same government." In short, the slaves, if freed, are to be deported. Very few indeed of the millions who have read the inscription on the memorial could be aware from it of the huge qualification that changes its apparent meaning.

Mr. Peterson says, "In portraying Jefferson as a wild and fanatical Jacobin, O'Brien is simply copying the Federalists. . . ." I am not. I am simply copying, often quite literally, the writings of Thomas Jefferson for the period 1789–1794. I don't know any writing from any non-French source that is more wildly and fanatically Jacobin than Jefferson's letter to William Short of January 3, 1793, in which he wrote, following the September massacres, about the French Revolution: "My own affections have been deeply wounded by some of the martyrs of this cause, but rather than it should

have failed, I would have seen half the earth desolated. Were there but an Adam and Eve, left in every country, and left free, it would be better than it now is."

Mr. Peterson depicts me as following "some obscure Burkean agenda antagonistic to the Enlightenment." Burke was not antagonistic to the Enlightenment. No, his writings on America, India, and Ireland plainly show that Burke was himself a child of the Enlightenment, whose values were, in his opinion, distorted and misapplied by the French revolutionaries.

Joyce Appleby and Terence Ball offer a curiously tentative discussion of Jefferson's views on race suggesting that Jefferson was really pretty liberal for his time. They leave out quite a lot, including Jefferson's proposals of 1776 for the amendment of the Slave Code: "A white woman having a child by a Negro would be required to leave the state within a year. The individual who violated these regulations would be placed 'out of the protection of the laws.'" This would have left her subject to enslavement or even to murder at the whim of her neighbors and was, therefore, a most severe punishment.

Too severe, indeed, for Jefferson's own slave-owning neighbors: the provision was dropped in a 1785 revision of the act, while Jefferson was in France.

Home From Nowhere

James Howard Kunstler ("Home From Nowhere," September *Atlantic*) does an excellent job of describing the problems of sprawl and the new-urbanist solution, based on urban neighborhoods and small towns of the nineteenth century. However, the new urbanism is less an antidote to sprawl than an improved model for suburban development which will make our decades-long trend of abandoning central cities more palatable to those who lament the loss of community in their placeless suburbs.

I live in a nineteenth-century neighborhood that in spite of decades of urban devolution is a great place to live. It is within walking distance of a transit stop and a neighborhood shopping center. It has a rich tapestry of housing styles, sizes, and types and a very diverse popu-

lation. Its physical configuration is highly eccentric and could not be reproduced by any design code, no matter how fine-grained. I wish that half the energy that goes into debating the virtues of the new urbanism went into preserving the virtues of the old urbanism. This is less a matter of inventing a new design vocabulary than of recovering the memory of what we knew even before the automobile about how to make humane places.

In my view, this shift in emphasis can be accomplished only by changes in public policy and land-use regulation more fundamental than tinkering with Second World War-era zoning and subdivision codes. Urban growth boundaries, like those adopted in Seattle, are one such measure. More important, the private automobile enjoys enormous subsidies, many of them invisible, including publicly funded highway construction, desert wars to protect the availability of cheap oil, and public policy that allows automobile users to escape the cost of the air emissions they produce. As long as these subsidies are in place, there will continue to be compelling advantages to consuming new land (even if the rate of consumption is reduced by more-compact new-urbanist development) at the expense of existing neighborhoods.

Matthew J. Kiefer
Boston, Mass.

In his indictment of zoning, Kunstler sets up a villainous "they" (officials and planners) who have perpetrated zoning on an innocent, hoodwinked citizenry (you and me), who suffer the consequences. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The federal legislation of 1926 that enabled states to authorize towns to create zoning laws grew out of a body of legal cases precipitated by pioneering suburban homeowners nervously guarding their property values. Those homeowners sometimes found their new neighborhoods encroaching on pig farming, brickmaking, and gravel digging, to refer to a few of the landmark cases. Their angry suits ousted the pig farmers and gravel diggers who had long preceded them in these newly suburbanizing neighborhoods. In the later annals of planning law, one may even find cases in which neighbors sued each other over the length of their grass and the location

of their clothesline. What chance do "accessory apartments" for lower-income renters stand in this climate? And will these homeowners permit the wholesale repeal of zoning? Not very likely.

Anne Mackin Krieger
Boston, Mass.

Advice & Consent

I feel compelled to respond to a letter in your October issue. Frances Elliott writes that although she is "not qualified to judge David Plotkin's article 'Good News and Bad News About Breast Cancer' (June *Atlantic*) from a medical standpoint," she is qualified to make a judgment as the mother of a cancer victim: "I am appalled at his lack of understanding, his brazen thoughtlessness, his disregard for the impact his words might have on those who are already suffering." Ms. Elliott is afraid that her daughter will forgo additional chemotherapy and radiation because Plotkin wrote that these treatments have little impact on aggressive cancers.

Ms. Elliott writes that her daughter "has suffered through breast removal, breast reconstruction, chemotherapy, and radiation treatments," and that "until she read Dr. Plotkin's article, she had high hopes that she would live. . . ." Every one of us hopes that we will live, but that is not sufficient reason to suppress the evidence. Perhaps because of Dr. Plotkin somebody with cancer will have the opportunity to make an informed decision about treatment; that is reason enough to justify the article. People who do not want to know what's really going on should stop reading reputable magazines.

Lance Stott
Austin, Texas

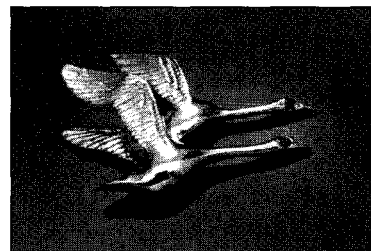
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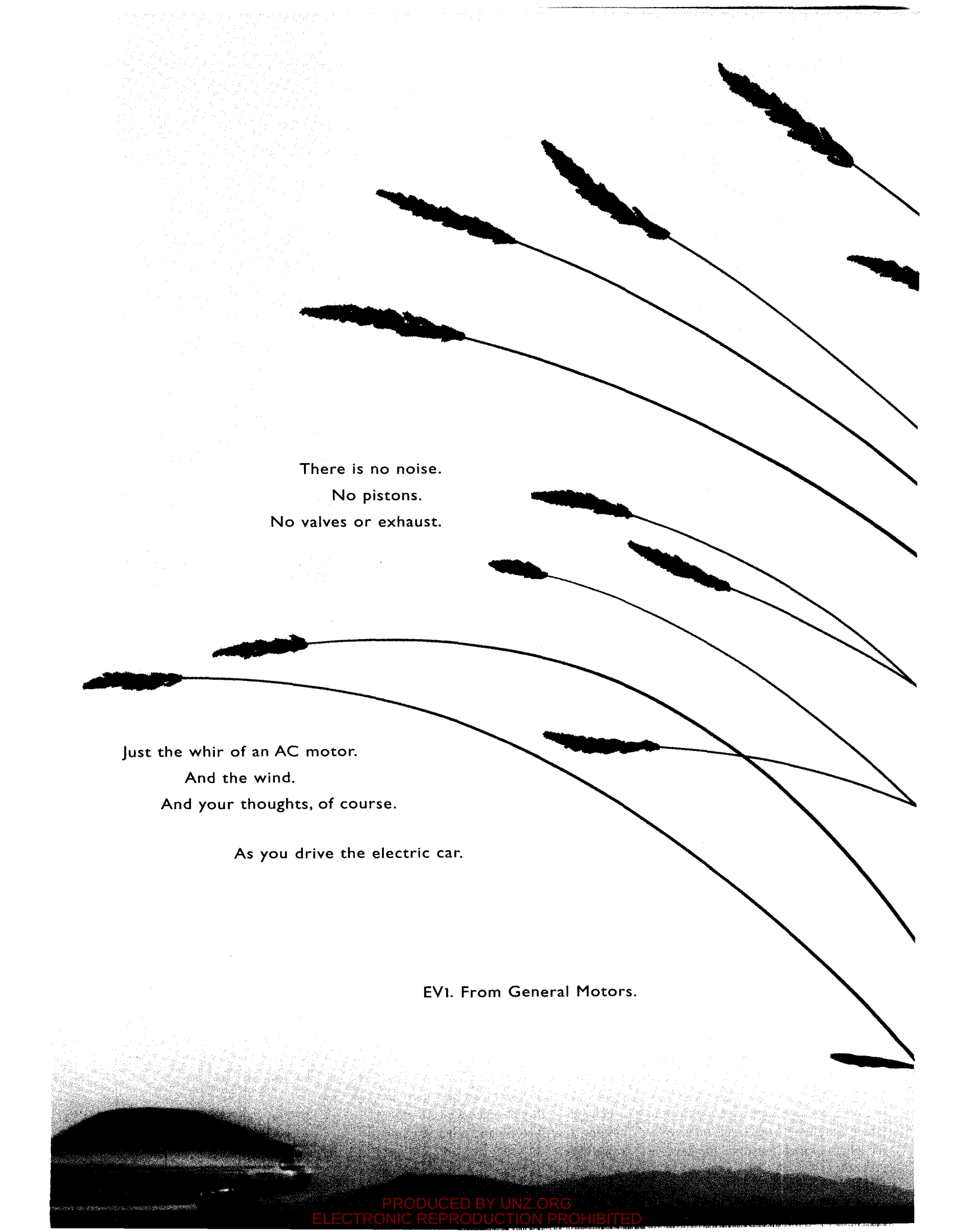
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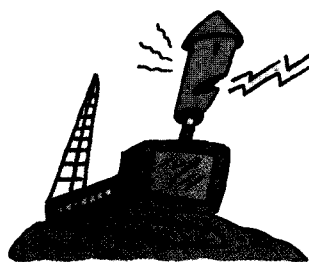
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Health & Safety

January 1, by today most commercial broadcast television and radio stations must have digital computer equipment capable of automatically receiving and transmitting emergency messages about natural disasters, such as earthquakes, storms, and floods, and man-made crises, such as civil disorders and toxic spills. Cable stations must have the new equipment by July. The requirement is part of a federal overhaul of the Emergency Broadcast System (EBS), starting with its name: the system will now be known as the Emergency Alert System (EAS). Lacking the automatic capabilities of the EAS, the EBS relied on human operators—a pitfall especially in rural areas, where stations often operate with little staff. Weaknesses in the warning system are believed to have contributed to 40 deaths that were caused by tornadoes in Alabama and Georgia in March of 1994.

The Skies

January 3, the Quadrantid meteor shower, one of the year's most reliable displays, peaks tonight. During the second half of the month Comet Hale-Bopp can be seen low in the east about an hour before sunrise. The comet will be around for several months, but devoted observers may wish to start looking now: after April it will be out of view for several thousand years. 23, Full Moon, also known this month as the Wolf or Winter Moon.



Food

January 31, as of today beef from cows aged approximately 30 to 42 months—"B" maturity cattle—will be ineligible for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's "select" grade and, unless it has more than "slight" or "small" amounts of marbling, for the "choice" grade as well (marbling, the flecks of fat within muscle, contributes to tenderness). Instead it will be considered "standard" grade and used mainly for ground beef or in processed foods. Virtually all of the graded beef sold in supermarkets is "select" or "choice" (the top grade, "prime," is assigned to only two percent of graded beef, that with extensive marbling). The new standards were requested by the industry, in an effort to ensure more consistently tender products and boost consumer satisfaction with beef. U.S. per capita beef consumption is at its lowest since the 1950s, largely because of Americans' wariness of fat; ironically, the new standards will result in fatter B carcasses in the choice grade.



Demographics

January 1, by today, according to provisions to implement the 1996 Telecommunications Act, established local telephone companies must make their operating and support systems available to new competitors. One consequence: many area codes, already burdened by the need for numbers for cellular phones, pagers, fax machines, and modems, will approach or reach exhaustion, because companies entering the local telecommunications market require blocks of new numbers. According to Bell Communications' North American Number-

ing Plan Administration, at least 14 cities or regions are likely to receive new area codes this year, starting with Los Angeles, which will receive its third area code later this month; 36 more area codes may be assigned by the year 2000. The demand for new numbers exists abroad as well: as of this month Finland will lengthen some new numbers by one digit, and Germany and Hong Kong are considering similar strategies.

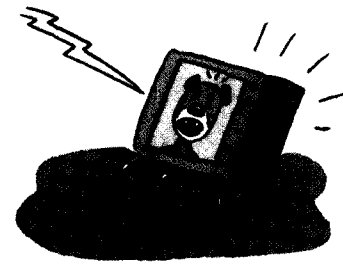


Government

January 1, today President Bill Clinton acquires the right to use the line-item veto: he can strip specific spending items (those that provide dollar figures) from appropriations bills that he signs into law. He can also cancel any new entitlement programs, expansions to existing benefits, or narrowly targeted tax breaks. Previously the President was obliged to sign or veto all bills in their entirety. The line-item veto was passed by Congress last spring. It will be in effect for eight years, after which Congress will vote on whether or not to extend it. The breadth of its reach remains to be seen: two thirds of federal spending is for items, such as established entitlement programs, that fall outside its purview.

Arts & Letters

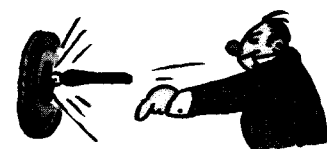
Parents should have an easier time in the new year locating quality television programs for their children. Starting January 2, commercial broadcast television stations must, in information provided for program listings and at the time of airing, identify "core" programs—those specifically designed to serve "the educational and informational needs of children." This



requirement is one of several adopted by the Federal Communications Commission last summer to strengthen its implementation of the 1990 Children's Television Act, which ruled that broadcasters must serve the interests of children but did not specify how. (As a result, some stations considered their obligation met by shows like *America's Funniest Home Videos* and *The Jetsons*.) Although the new rules leave it to stations to determine what constitutes educational fare, advocates argue that the public nature of the labeling system is likely to ensure compliance.

100 Years Ago

John Jay Chapman, writing in the January, 1897, issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*: "Both in language and in elocution [Ralph Waldo] Emerson was a practiced and consummate artist, who knew how both to command his effects and to conceal his means. The casual practical, disarming directness with which he writes puts any honest man at his mercy. What difference does it make whether a man who can talk like this is following an argument or not? You cannot always see Emerson clearly; he is hidden by a high wall; but you always know exactly on what spot he is standing. You judge it by the flight of the objects he throws over the wall,—a bootjack, an apple, a crown, a razor, a volume of verse. With one or other of these missiles, all delivered with a very tolerable aim, he is pretty sure to hit you."





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The Spirit of Cotonou

Finally, some helpful advice to the French on how to enhance the role of their language in the world

I HAVE on one or two occasions made note in this space of the longstanding antipathy of the French people toward the infiltration of English words into their language—an attitude that has often been backed up with ugly threats and attempts at legal redress. I have no desire to belabor the issue at this time, although the past few years have witnessed the most intense level of such activity since the mid-1980s.

In 1994, for example, France's National Assembly enacted the so-called Loi Toubon, a law named for its champion, the French Culture Minister, Jacques Toubon. The law called for a ban, enforceable by fines of up to \$1,800 and by prison terms, on the use of foreign words in business or government communications, in broadcasting, and in advertising if "suitable equivalents" existed in French. (A committee had previously been established to draw up suitable equivalents where none existed; the committee's work has resulted in the coining of 3,500 new French words, mostly to replace English-language ones.) France's Constitutional Council, the country's highest judicial body, eventually weakened the law, applying it only to government documents, but not before a bill was introduced in the British Parliament that would have authorized ordinary traffic wardens in Britain to impose stiff fines on the spot whenever they heard a French word spoken.

The Toubon controversy notwithstanding, last year another language-content law went into effect in France, mandating that at least 40 percent of all the songs played on the country's 1,300 FM stations be French songs—a situation that one disc jockey compared to asking artists to paint 40 percent of their work in blue. Nor has French-language chauvinism been limited to France. Last spring in Quebec the provincial government banned the

distribution during Passover of imported kosher food that had been labeled only in English. As Jews attempted to celebrate their deliverance from Egypt, the Francophone response amounted, in effect, to a declaration of "Ils ne passeront pas," Marshal Pétain's defiant slogan at Verdun.

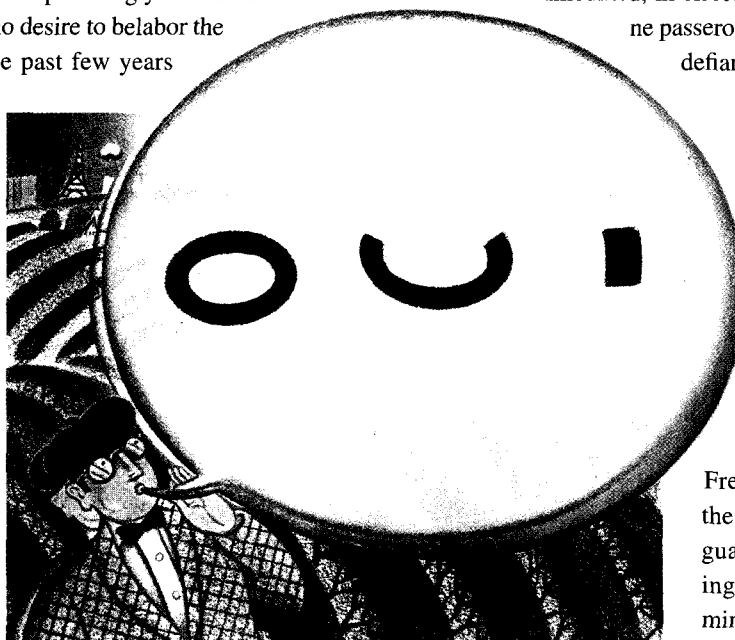
■ ■ ■

But, as I say, I don't wish to belabor episodes like these. For whereas efforts to discriminate against English words in French are at once irritating and futile, a parallel and positive effort by the French simply to promote the wider use of their language seems to be gathering strength and is, to my mind, altogether admirable. Why should not speakers of

French seek greater worldwide resonance for the tongue that Anatole France once likened to a woman "so beautiful, proud, modest, strong, touching, voluptuous, chaste, noble, intimate, crazy, and good that one loves her with all one's being"?

The efforts in behalf of French have been advanced along several fronts. One is demographic: increasing the production of native French-speakers. The French have for centuries been as worried about their birth rate as the English have been about their digestion, and in a series of recent public pronouncements aimed at private-sector initiative, the French Prime Minister, Alain Juppe, has sought to induce new spasms of fecundity.

A second front involves the work of a once-moribund organization called La Francophonie, which is made up of France and some fifty former French colonies and other French-speaking nations. In an effort to boost the group's international influence, La Francophonie has created the post of general secretary; its occupant will attempt to mold the membership into a



by Cullen Murphy

Illustration by Dave Calver

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coherent bloc. La Francophonie has also dangled membership before countries that may hitherto have had only an attenuated experience of French, such as Bulgaria, Equatorial Guinea, Moldova, and Sao Tome and Principe, all of which have in fact joined the organization. These countries, lured perhaps by an expectation of trade advantages, may not represent a force multiplier, as military strategists like to say, but they do represent a start. (And, to be fair, a Bulgarian connection does exist. The French word *macédoine*, meaning “hodge-podge,” is derived from the name of the Balkan region known as Macedonia, whose ethnic diversity is its distinguishing trait, and whose incorporation into a greater Bulgaria was once hotly desired by Bulgarian nationalists.)

A year ago, at the biennial meeting of La Francophonie, in Cotonou, Benin, France’s new President, Jacques Chirac, issued a call for French-speakers to stake a claim on the Internet (the *inforoute*, he actually called it), a communications medium that otherwise seems destined to become an English-language monopoly. In making the case for “linguistic pluralism and cultural diversity” on the *inforoute*, Chirac observed that if even French, which is spoken by some 150 million people—making it No. 9 in the world, after Chinese, Hindustani, Russian, English, Spanish, Arabic, Bengali, and Portuguese—is faced with uncertain prospects, the situation must be much worse for smaller languages, which in Chirac’s view risk “complete eradication.”

The point is hard to dispute. Some languages manage to maintain a certain vitality even in death, so great was once their sway. In England the Treasury Minister was recently subjected to withering scorn when, *ex nihilo*, he promulgated an edict prohibiting Latin tag phrases in departmental memoranda. In Finland—which, unlike England, was never even a part of the Roman Empire—a weekly news program in Latin called *Nuntii Latini* (*News in Latin*) is broadcast on national radio and transmitted worldwide by satellite. Latin’s future is secure. But what about the future of Flemish, Irish, or Inuit, not to mention Navajo or Topoiyo?

The question is not merely academic. Judging from examples in Howard

Rheingold’s *They Have a Word For It*, exotic languages harbor valuable conceptual resources, much the way exotic flora harbor commercial ones. The Tierra del Fuegan word *mamihlapinatapei*, which connotes “a meaningful look, shared between two people, expressing mutual unstated feelings,” has potentially broad applications beyond its place of origin. The same could be said of such words in the language of Easter Island as *anga-anga* (“a thought, perhaps groundless, that one is being gossiped about, arising from one’s own sense of guilt”) and *hakamaroo* (“the act of keeping borrowed objects until the owner has to ask for them back”). It is perhaps not surprising that a sophisticated culture on Easter Island seems to have collapsed under mysterious circumstances.

■ ■ ■

That France should attempt to recolonize the world linguistically is surely more compatible with the aims of a great and confident power than is its attempt to preserve French as a genetically inviolate hothouse flower. And it is not hard to see how France, with a little ingenuity, could exert certain kinds of leverage to advance the spirit of Cotonou—although, inexplicably, it has yet to do so.

Not long ago a few dozen demonstrators from Denmark descended on Paris to denounce France’s plans to conduct nuclear testing underneath Mururoa atoll, in the South Pacific. Even though the Danes deferentially waged their campaign in the host country’s native tongue (their T-shirts carried the slogan CHIRAC, NON!), which nationalists might have applauded, they were rounded up by the police and detained at their hotel. A better strategy by the Quai d’Orsay in this instance would have been to make an offer: France would forever desist from nuclear testing, everywhere, if in return French were adopted as the official language of the global environmental movement in all its internal and external communications—adopted, that is, by Paix-Verte, Le Club de la Sierre, Les Amis de la terre, l’Audubon, and all the rest. This is a high-stakes quid pro quo that the environmentalists would have been seen as churlish to have refused.

The government of France or one of the country’s giant corporate combines should also buy the Microsoft Corpora-

tion and, if possible, one or more of the major Hollywood studios. The *inforoute* and the telecommunications industry generally are driven by the need for content, and there is no reason that the content could not be at least superficially Gallicized. The dialogue in most movies would only be improved for being in French; often the titles (*Mission: Impossible*) would not even have to change. France easily commands the resources to become a player. Could Bill Gates be persuaded to sell his Microsoft shares? To replace his prized compound outside Seattle, France should offer Gates a new “campuslike” setting outside Paris, perhaps at Versailles, where he might even find a dwelling commensurate with his apparent needs.

Finally, the French ought to give some thought to learning how to swim the English Channel. The characteristics of the English language that have assured its good fortune—its outward-looking ambition, its embrace of the new and the foreign—are reflected in the fact that of the 760 or so Channel crossings made thus far, almost all have been made by “Anglo-Saxons” (as the French style Britons and Americans when lumping them together). Only six have been made by French swimmers. This is perhaps mere symbolism—but *quelle symbolisme!*

■ ■ ■

A word of caution to English-speaking peoples: even as we welcome competition in the open marketplace, we must beware attempts to divide and conquer. Maurice Druon, the perpetual secretary of the fabled Académie Française and therefore one of France’s most vociferous language gendarmes, has quietly suggested in a small journal that circulates among hidebound British elites that Great Britain set up a forty-member English Academy modeled on the French one, and that the two academies together take on the “dark tide” of “Amerenglish.” Should such an unlikely eventuality come to pass, I would hope that Americans would create an academy of their own. At the very least, the complex process of picking forty representative members—George F. Will or Deion Sanders? Gertrude Himmelfarb or Madonna? Vernon Jordan or Mel Brooks?—would remind M. Druon of the diverse resources at Amerenglish’s disposal. ☞

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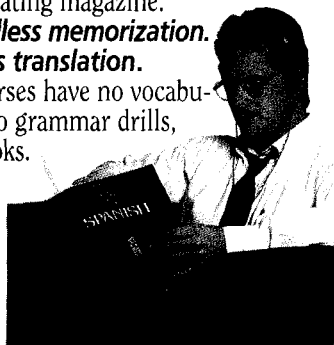
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MAKING sense of Cuba's economy is not easy. There's a joke I heard when I was in Havana recently: The CIA sends an agent down to live in Cuba and report back on the state of the economy. He returns six months later, babbling, and is carted off to an asylum. "I don't get it," he mutters over and over. "There's no gasoline, but the cars are still running. There's no food in the stores, but everyone cooks dinner every night. They have no money, they have nothing at all—but they drink rum and go dancing."

It's an economy of loaves and fishes, where things somehow come out of thin air, ingenuity, and sheer will. It's also an economy that is recovering from the crisis

triggered by the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the collapse of the socialist bloc. From 1989 to 1993 Cuba's gross domestic product declined, according to official estimates, by 35 percent. Imports dropped 75 percent, and the deficit reached 33 percent of GDP. Oil imports from Russia fell from 13 million tons in 1989 to less than 7 million tons in

1992. Cuba not only had to replace the oil and support it had received from the Soviet Union but also had to establish an entirely new set of trading partners, because 85 percent of its trade had been with the socialist bloc. Making matters worse was the U.S. economic embargo.

The Cubans prefer the term "economic blockade"—not unreasonably, since

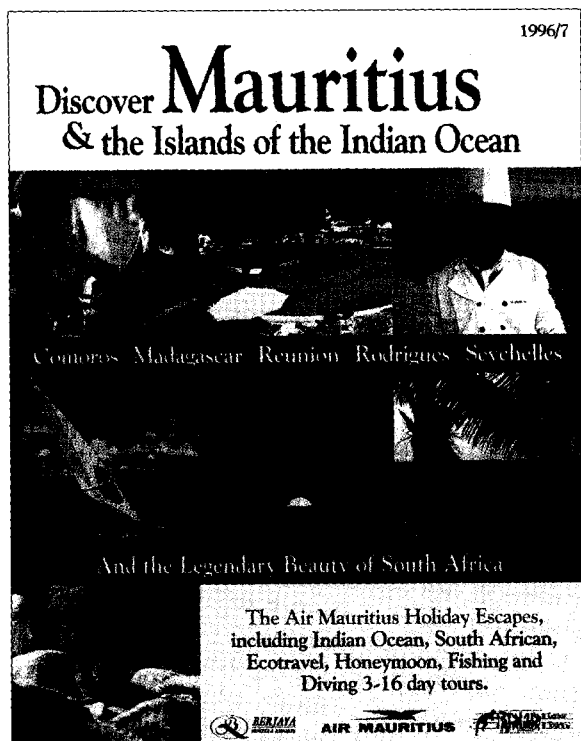
the United States does not simply decline to do business with Cuba but directly interferes in Cuba's trade relations with other countries.

The pettiness of the blockade is striking as one looks at the particulars of its enforcement over the past several years. A Swedish corporation, for example, has been prohibited from selling a sophisticated piece of medical equipment to Cuba because it contains a single filter patented under U.S. law. Dozens of other transactions between Cuba and foreign corporations—involving spare parts for x-ray machines from France, neurological diagnostic equipment from Japan, parts to clean dialysis machines from Argentina, Italian-made chemicals for water treatment, and many others—were likewise prevented by U.S. law.

But in spite of U.S. harassment and meddling, Cuba has found scores of new trading partners, and has embarked on joint ventures and foreign-investment projects with firms from Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Mexico, Russia, Spain, and other countries as well. These projects range from the construction of five-star hotels to enterprises in mining, oil exploration, telecommunications, and biotechnology.

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And many of the projects are not small. Investment projects include a \$1.5 billion deal with a Mexican telecommunications company, a \$500 million nickel-mining venture with a Canadian company, a \$500 million mining deal with an Australian company, and a \$500 million textile deal with a Mexican company. A Monte Carlo-based company built a new terminal in Havana harbor for cruise ships, which has already opened for business. At last count there were 240 joint ventures in Cuba, involving fifty-seven countries in forty areas of the economy. The foreign investment projects announced to date total some \$5 billion.

For seven years Cuba has been actively investing in new modes of production, restructuring the economy, and establishing new trade relations around the globe. Now the investments may be starting to pay off. After five years of a sinking GDP, the economic decline came to a halt in 1994: Cuba showed a slight growth in GDP of 0.7 percent. The GDP grew by 2.5 percent in 1995. In the first half of 1996 (the most recent figures available at the time this magazine went to press) the GDP was growing at 9.6 percent, with continued annual growth projected.

AT the level of daily life the economic recovery is dramatic. In 1989 the Malecón, a six-lane seaside highway, had more Chinese Flying Pigeon bicycles on it than cars. The occasional car would be a tourist taxi, or an aging Lada (an inexpensive Fiat manufactured in Russia), or a Chevrolet from the 1950s. Although Cuba's economic infrastructure and basic social institutions were holding (schools, hospitals, and factories were still operating), by 1992 and 1993 electrical blackouts occurred in residential areas for most of the day several days a week. Homes had water for only a few hours a day. Lack of fuel oil forced factories to cut back production. Buses were rare, unpredictable, and liable to break down.

Last summer, watching the traffic on the Malecón, I could barely believe I was in Havana. On the street in front of me were a bright-green new Suzuki Sidekick, a new Mercedes-Benz truck, a new Honda sedan, a new Toyota van—and a constant flow of Ladas and '57 Chevis. For those with dollars gasoline was plentiful. Down the road a bit was a new Fiat deal-

ership. Half the models in the showroom cost about \$12,000; the others, vans and small trucks, were going for \$22,000 or \$23,000. A few hundred yards away was a gleaming new hotel, its massive foyer all marble, with Mozart playing softly. A touch-screen computer gave information in several languages about services, restaurants, and shopping. The cheapest rooms were \$150 a night, the executive suites \$400. And it was obviously not just a tourist hotel: it had conference rooms and a business center with computer facilities, fax machines, photocopiers, laser printers, copies of Cuba's foreign-investment laws, and full-color directories of banks, hotels, restaurants, government offices—and anything else one might need if one were, say, thinking of initiating a joint venture somewhere on the island.

In Havana some of the new wealth is clearly starting to be felt in the population generally. On almost every block, it seems, is a freshly painted house. The discos are jammed every night with both Cubans and foreigners. A fast-food chain called El Rápido has sprung up, its patios full of brightly colored tables crowded with Cubans and foreigners eating hot dogs and pizza and drinking Cokes.

Even during the worst of the economic crisis Cuba managed to avoid starvation, or even widespread malnutrition. Indeed, one of the remarkable things about Cuba's response to the crisis is how the country could keep functioning after its economy was cut by a third. Basic indicators have held steady throughout the economic crisis: Cuba's infant-mortality rate in 1989 was about ten per thousand live

births, and life expectancy was seventy-six years—comparable to the statistics for the United States and the other Western industrialized countries. The Cuban infant-mortality rate has even improved slightly since then—it's now about nine per thousand live births. The literacy rate is 98 percent, and no measurable homelessness exists. Cuba still has more doctors and teachers per capita than almost any other country in the world. In a population of 11 million, more than half a million Cubans hold university degrees.

Media accounts often mention "rationing" as evidence of how desperate Cuba's post-1990 situation is. In fact Cuba has had "rationing" since thirty-five years before the crisis began: every person, regardless of income, is entitled to a basic allotment of food and essentials—beans, rice, vegetables, fruit, eggs, meat, soap, cooking oil, cigarettes, gasoline, and so on. Shortly after the revolution every child up to age seven was guaranteed a liter of milk a day for twenty-five cents; in the 1980s children up to fourteen, along with the sick and the elderly, received this entitlement. In 1990 the guarantee of milk was reduced to include only children seven and under again. Also, through the 1980s parallel markets supplied a range of goods, from bread to wine to meat to canned food, that could be bought with pesos without restriction. As the economy sank, these goods went "on the book" (the *libreta*, or ration book) or disappeared altogether. Bread was rationed, meat rations shrank, canned goods were hard to find—until virtually all goods were available *only* through the rationing system, and even some of the guaranteed items didn't always appear as promised.

There was enough food to get by, but just barely. "We have *enough*," a friend of mine said in 1992. "There's food on the table every day; the kids are going to school. But you want something more once in a while. You want to buy a Coke, or a new dress. You want to sit in a café, or go dancing, or just buy a can of something for dinner instead of soaking the beans again and hoping that the cooking gas will come on before two in the morning."

As the economy plummeted, prostitution returned. With it came painful memories of the Batista era, when Cuba was a playground for wealthy foreigners, and



In Havana, trademarks all around

It's an economy of loaves and fishes: things somehow come out of thin air, ingenuity, and sheer will.

money laundering, gambling, and prostitution were among the nation's most visible economic institutions. The official position in recent years was that *this* prostitution was different from *that* prostitution: *that* prostitution was what women did to buy food for their starving infants; *this* prostitution reflected a malaise born of boredom and frustration rather than economic desperation. Hundreds of thousands of tourists were now flooding the country each year, with their Nikes and Walkmans, jewelry and credit cards, while Cubans were increasingly standing in long lines to catch overcrowded buses to go to work at a factory or a university that might shut down partway through the day because of an electricity shortage. By mid-1994 the peso—which in principle was equivalent to a dollar—was trading on the black market at 120 to a dollar. It was clear that as long as the economic crisis continued, prostitution, petty theft, and black-market activities would grow.

Salaries in Cuba can range from 100 pesos a month to a few hundred. A factory worker might earn 120 pesos a month, a professor 350. Anyone who has completed a university education will automatically earn at least 195 pesos a month. A top surgeon might earn as much as 600. It has been common in the past few years to see in the U.S. press that "Cubans are now living on the equivalent of a dollar a month." But this misrepresents the nature of the economic situation. The Cuban economy is simply not structured on the model of dependent capitalism. Basic necessities, at consistent, easily affordable prices, are still bought in pesos, regardless of what the exchange rate is. Rent for Cubans is around six or eight percent of their monthly salary, no matter how much they earn. All the food provided "on the book" would cost a family of four perhaps thirty or forty pesos a month. Education continues to be free, medical care is

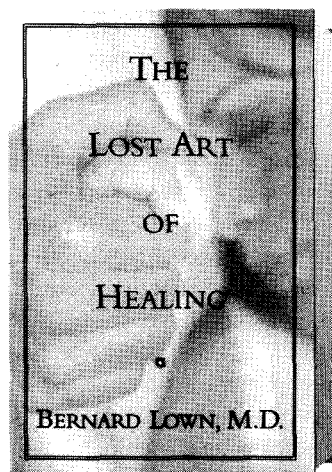
free, buses cost a few cents. The peso's loss of purchasing power did not mean that people lost their homes or couldn't afford to send their children to school. Rather, the economic crisis has meant that nothing except necessities could be bought with Cuban currency.

The Cuban government responded to the crisis in part by developing trade and investment and in part by introducing elements of a mixed economy. In September of 1993 the government announced that the state-run farms would be dismantled and replaced by worker-managed cooperatives. By the fall of 1994 Cuban fuel supplies had climbed back up, and the electricity shortages became brief and infrequent. The Cuban government also legalized the small business enterprises and farmers' markets. Food prices at these markets vary—some are affordable for everyone, some too expensive for anyone not running a private business in dollars. But the presence of the markets meant that the food shortages were over—and, perhaps as important, that the *sense* of shortage was over. The monotony of people's diets, the starkness, the sense of being limited to the goods "on the book," have by now given way to the far more tolerable project of just managing on a tight budget.

THE economic changes in Cuba go to the very structure of the Cuban economy. Joint ventures have been permitted since 1982, but for many years the foreign partner could not hold more than a 49 percent share unless there were exceptional circumstances. In 1992 the Cuban constitution was modified to recognize a variety of new forms of property. New kinds of foreign investment, Cuban corporations, and joint ventures were legalized. Foreign corporations were given the right to repatriate profits freely. The law was modified again in September of 1995, to permit foreign investment with up to 100 percent foreign ownership. Foreign investors are guaranteed full protection of their assets and the right to remove profits in hard currency. And they may also acquire and develop real estate, although they may not buy or develop residential properties for Cuban nationals. Foreign investment is permitted in all sectors of the economy except health, education, and the armed services.

Cuba's development strategy in the

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Dr. Bernard Lown, professor emeritus of cardiology at Harvard, argues with passion, wit and wisdom for bringing the lost art of healing back to its rightful place in medical practice.



HEALTH AGAINST WEALTH

HMOs
and the
Breakdown
of Medical
Trust



George Anders

"A vivid indictment of health maintenance organizations and those who run them."

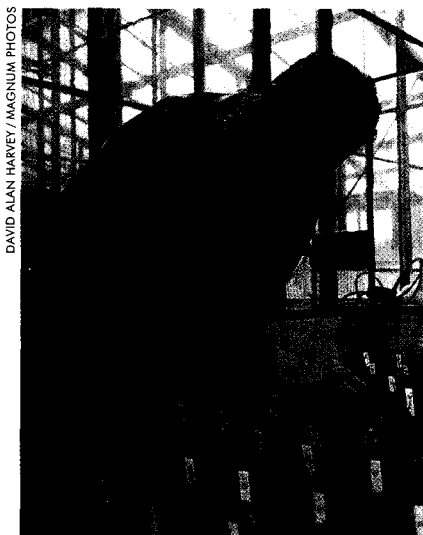
—Boston Globe



face of its economic crisis contrasts sharply with the policies of other countries in Latin America and the Third World. Typically, foreign investors come to Third World countries because there are far fewer environmental restrictions and protections for labor than in First World countries. A textile factory in Haiti can pay its employees twelve cents an hour. A factory in Cairo can pour untreated pollution into the air with little or no concern for environmental laws. Cuba, however, is trying to attract investment without making these tradeoffs. It requires foreign nationals to include in their investment proposals provisions for waste disposal and land use consistent with sustainable development. "Look," a Cuban economist told me, "in the end it means there will be more interest in foreign investment rather than less. If you build a multimillion-dollar hotel on the beach at Varadero, you want to have assurances that there won't be any chance of leaky oil tankers a half mile down, from some company doing oil exploration. It's one of the advantages of a centralized economy. We can actually make a company's investment more secure than it would be in an unregulated economy."

Employers can fire unsatisfactory employees and hire new ones through a government agency, although a worker can challenge a dismissal as unfair or discriminatory. Foreign companies, like all Cuban enterprises, are prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, sex, or ethnicity.

The restructuring has now started to pay off. Furthermore, the increase in GDP reflects growth that is distributed broadly throughout the economy. In 1995 nickel production increased about 65 percent, tobacco 52 percent, and tourism 20 percent. Exports increased 20 percent, and imports 21 percent. Fifty thousand new homes are under construction. Cuba's biotechnology industry competes in the world market, with more than 160 products developed by fifty-three research centers, ranging from genetically engineered crop seeds that are disease-resistant to a vaccine for hepatitis B. The level of Cuban tourism is now greater than it was at its height in pre-revolutionary Cuba. In 1994 Cuba had 617,000 tourists, putting it on a par with Aruba and the U.S. Virgin Islands. In 1995 the number of tourists was conservatively estimated at 750,000. In-



Growth industry: biotechnology

come from tourism grew from \$165 million in 1989 to more than \$850 million in 1994 and to \$1 billion in 1995. From January to April of last year—the period in which the Cuban-American planes were shot down and the Helms-Burton bill was passed—Cuba had 375,000 tourists, an increase of 44 percent from the same period the year before.

To say that Cuba is now inviting free enterprise does not really describe the country's economic restructuring. For the most part there are two different kinds of profit-based enterprises in Cuba: very large and very small. Foreign investors account for the very large, individual Cubans for the very small. Cubans obtain a license, for which they pay a fee based on the income anticipated for that type of business. A family might turn its living room into a small restaurant; someone with a car might start hiring it out as a taxi; a woman might make traditional Cuban pastries and sell them in her front yard. Thus there is now a substantial legal "informal sector."

The informal sector in Third World economies typically involves a high degree of economic insecurity. A highway intersection or a city sidewalk will be crowded with "entrepreneurs" hawking their wares—parrots, mangoes, hubcaps, hood ornaments, U.S. dollars, computer parts, pistachios. On a bad day the entrepreneur may return home with no earnings at all, and his or her family will literally go hungry the next day. In Cuba, since everyone is already guaranteed that an extensive set of basic needs will be met, the income from the new private

enterprises goes almost entirely for consumer goods. In the living room of a woman who serves dinner for four dollars is a Sony stereo system with enormous speakers, a new color television, and a VCR. A taxi driver is wearing a new leather jacket. Children playing at a home where pastries are sold in the yard are wearing new Nikes. Thus, ironically, for many Cubans private enterprise feels much the way ideologues of capitalism describe it: with economic freedom, they say, you are your own person, you earn what you earn, and you spend it as you like. Yet this is possible in Cuba only because and insofar as it has remained socialist.

During the 1980s the external debt of Third World countries increased enormously. In the face of their inability to meet debt-service requirements, and under pressure from the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, many instituted "structural adjustment" programs, selling off any state enterprises that were profitable and reducing expenditures on food subsidies and health care for populations that were already living very marginally. The resulting profits and savings have generally gone not into social investment or job creation but into what Latin Americans call *la deuda impagable*—"the unpayable debt." After the collapse of the Soviet bloc Cuba's future did not look bright. If it followed the road of dependent capitalism, it could expect to end up like Brazil or Guatemala, with pockets of extreme wealth alongside widespread poverty, starvation, unemployment, and violence—in short, Cuba could expect to return to the way it was before the revolution. Instead Cuba has in seven years restructured its entire economy. But it has done so while maintaining its commitments to many socialist principles, including the belief that all members of society are entitled to food, housing, education, and medical care.

CUBA'S economic transformation has profound implications for the United States, particularly the U.S. business community. It is a country of 11 million people with middle-class tastes and a middle-class lifestyle, hungry for TVs, VCRs, Cuisinarts, and boom boxes. It has a healthy, stable, highly educated work force, useful to those seeking to es-

(Continued on page 30)

JANUARY
1997

Arts & ENTERTAINMENT

PREVIEW



Dance

Twyla Tharp's
Energetic
New Tour

Theater

The Mystery
of a Young
Man's Death

Film

Ron Rifkin
in The
Substance
of Fire

Classical

Move Over,
Beethoven—
Here's Asia

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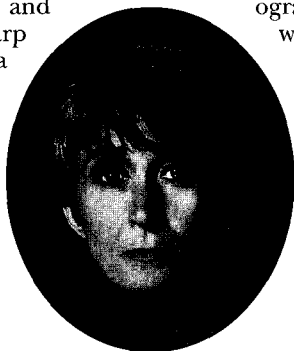
JEEP

Dance and Theater

BY AUSTIN BAER AND NANCY DALVA

THARP'S TROUPE REDISCOVERS HER ROOTS

The ever mettlesome and dynamic Twyla Tharp ushers in 1997 with a month of nonstop terpsichorean barnstorming that in its scope and potential influence on new audiences recalls the pioneer days of American dance, when divas like Ruth St. Denis and Ballet Russes primas like Alexandra Danilova shared their farm-town dressing rooms with chickens. Although the stops on the touring event called *Tharp!* are considerably more up-to-date, and Tharp herself has left the stage, the feeling is marvelously similar: Twyla has set out to conquer the continent. Hers is a formidable accomplishment: in a time when dance seems to be diminishing in terms of support, in terms of attendance, and in terms of taste, Tharp has bucked the trend. Her new company is brilliant—gutsy and game, gamin and gallant, and the genuine article: every move is authentic Tharp. The choreographer puts these newcomers through their paces in three new dances, all very different. Two will feel familiar to her fans: 66 (as in Route 66) is in the chore-



The choreographer (top) and her dancers



ographer's lightest, her Broadway, mode. *Heroes* once again pairs Tharp with the composer Philip Glass, in a dark and glamorous technical razzle-dazzle. The result is reminiscent of Tharp's great *Fait Accompli* and *In the Upper Room* (though not their equal). Thus for the aficionado the pleasure in these works lies not so much in the territory as in watching the dancers make it their own. The program opener, *Sweet Fields*, is simply and truly breathtaking. Using traditional American choral music of the previous two centuries—deeply felt, harmonious, and resonant, and surprisingly evocative of Gregorian chant—Tharp has made a wonderfully clear work that, without any fuss at all, returns dance to its sacred roots, here sunk deep in American soil, sublimated and sublime. It will make believers of us all. (Philadelphia, January 7–12; Princeton, New Jersey, 14–15; Hanover, New Hampshire, 17–18; Burlington, Vermont, 20; Pittsburgh, 24–25; Durham, North Carolina, 27; Sarasota, Florida, 29; Nashville, January 31–February 1.) —N.D.

A RESTORATION GENIUS RESTORED

Historians of British drama remember Thomas Otway (1652–1685) for a handful of plays, among which *Venice Preserv'd* is probably his finest. Against her father's will the senator's daughter Belvidera has married the honorable Jaffeir. Maintaining her in the style that befits her lineage, Jaffeir is soon bankrupt. Rebuffed in his attempt to effect a reconciliation with the senator, he is recruited by his friend Pierre for a plot against the state. Implausible though the premise may be, Otway's blend of traditions native (Shake-

A high tragedy



speare) and foreign (Racine) heats up to a pitch of rhetorical extravagance seldom equaled on our stage. Well into the nineteenth century the most thrilling actors of each succeeding generation vied for the star parts. Today the revival by Manhattan's tiny but daring Pearl Theatre Company qualifies as the very rarest of curios (January 24–March 8; 212-598-9802). By an odd twist of fate the company performs in space leased from a family by the name of Otway—lineal descendants of Thomas, whose spirit is surely beaming in the flies. —A.B.

THE ATLANTA ENIGMA

Drama, being drama, has nothing equivalent to the so-called unreliable narrator of prose fiction, but Horton Foote's Pulitzer Prize-winning play, *The Young Man From Atlanta*, brings to mind all the veils of ambiguity that tricky device implies. In an introduction to the published script Foote lets us know that the titular young man from Atlanta will not appear. But a second one does, ringing changes (we may suspect) on what seems to be the first's well-oiled confidence game, telling hard-luck stories and eliciting charity. The setting is Houston, where the aging Will and Lily Dale Kidder are coping as best they can with the loss of their only child, a thirty-seven-year-old son they loved but hardly knew, who lived far away, worked a job they could never figure out, and one day, although he could not swim, walked into a lake and drowned. Why did he do it? Was it heartbreak? Blackmail? His roommate, the first young man from Atlanta, seems crushed with grief, but is he? And who is the second? A copycat con artist?



Did he drown?

A rival? An accomplice? By curtain fall it looks like the Atlanta triangle is a place where the narcotic illusion of love costs a man his bottom dollar and the real thing does not exist. This month Robert Falls stages this instant American classic at Chicago's Goodman Theatre with Rip Torn and Shirley Knight (January 10–March 2; 312-443-3800). Hope that the production is definitive: in late March it transfers to Broadway. —A.B.

Austin Baer is a writer based in New York. Nancy Dalva is working on a series of essays on Merce Cunningham.

COVER ILLUSTRATION BY KARI ALBERG

Film

BY ELLA TAYLOR

ALL IN THE FAMILY

It's not easy to bring a play as talky and cerebral as Jon Robin Baitz's acclaimed *The Substance of Fire* to the screen. But Baitz, who wrote the screenplay, and director Daniel Sullivan collaborate just as well on film as they did on the stage, bringing several members of the original cast with them. Ron Rifkin gives an electric performance as Isaac Geldhart, a Holocaust survivor



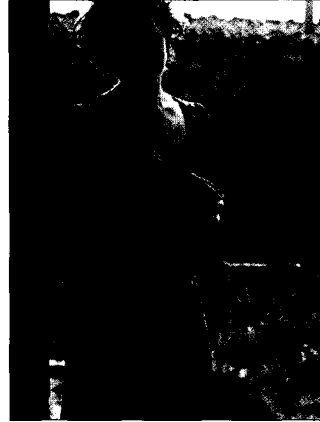
Cast (above) and director Daniel Sullivan

and old-school publisher who's about to wreck his ailing family business—and his family—by publishing a gorgeously mounted but unmarketable multi-volume tome on Nazi medical experiments. Obsessed with his traumatic past, the aging tyrant bullies into submission his three children—gay Aaron (Tony Goldwyn), the company accountant, who has a nose for best sellers; Sarah (Sarah Jessica Parker), a lively young woman relegated to the role of family bimbo; and Martin (Timothy Hutton), a solitary landscape designer. When the children finally wrestle the business away from their father, he turns his rage inward and declines dramatically, forcing the whole family to face up to what it has become. Wisely, Baitz and Sullivan avoid crude causal links to the Holocaust, which serves as an appropriately shadowy backdrop to this riveting family drama, as hilarious as it is lacerating and poignant. The movie's power lies in Baitz's willingness to let his characters run to their extremes without judging them—especially Isaac, a man so irascible that until tragedy strikes, he's incapable of imagining what it feels like to be somebody else, even his own repressed self.

Ella Taylor is a film critic for LA Weekly.

THE THIEF, THE NURSE, HER PATIENT, AND HER LOVER

Set in the Sahara Desert and in an abandoned Tuscan villa in the final days of the Second World War, Michael Ondaatje's 1992 Booker Prize-winning novel, *The English Patient*, is stuffed with cinematic images, many of which find their way into this good-looking adaptation, written and directed by Anthony Minghella (*Truly, Madly, Deeply*). Less easy to adapt is Ondaatje's linguistic style, which resembles a long prose poem and works better on the page than as spoken dialogue. This may be why the first half of the movie feels careful and supine, like the patient (Ralph Fiennes) who lies in the villa, burned beyond recognition, and tells the story of his desert love affair with a colleague's wife (Kristin Scott Thomas) to Hana, a young Canadian nurse (Juliette Binoche) who tries



Binoche heals the wounded

to patch over her own wartime trauma by caring for him until his inevitable death. *The English Patient* cuts back and forth between the disastrous events in the desert that explain how the patient was burned and the villa, where a ragged and temporary but sustaining community of war-damaged people has formed around Hana, including Caravaggio (Willem Dafoe), a Canadian thief and spy whose thumbs were torn off by the Nazis and who knows more about the patient than he lets on, and a young Sikh army engineer (Naveen Andrews), who defuses the region's many mines and brings comfort to Hana. Although the cast is uniformly good and the directing competent, it's not until the last hour that the movie picks up and becomes the heart-stopping David Lean-style epic it was meant to be.

FROM MEAN STREETS TO THE COURTROOM

Although it begins with a violent set piece that's all the more chilling for its low-key execution, Sidney Lumet's *Night Falls on Manhattan* proceeds as a character movie that plumbs the shallows of power-mongering and moral equivocation in American public life. Young Sean Casey is a street cop turned Manhattan prosecutor who's so free of moral blemish that if he weren't played by super-hunk Andy Garcia, you might want to punch him. After he secures the high-profile conviction of a murderous drug lord (Shiek Mahmud-Bey), Sean's career soars, which snags him a glamorous love interest (Lena Olin) but also draws him deep into the rotting heart of the criminal-justice system, flanked by conniving politicians (Ron Leibman does a great

turn as the outgoing district attorney who grooms Sean as his successor) on one side and by corrupt cops on the other. When Sean's policeman father (Ian Holm, wonderful as always) becomes a suspect in an investigation of



Clean-cut Garcia cleans up the streets

cops on the take, the young idealist is forced to choose between loyalty and professional integrity. This might be interesting if the limb that Sean goes out on to protect his father were anything more than a twig. Without serious political and ethical stakes, the movie has nowhere to go but deeper into pious platitude and faux drama. Richard Dreyfuss, bafflingly got up like Alan Dershowitz, is nonetheless charming as a William Kunstler-like defense lawyer who ends up mentoring Sean from the sidelines.



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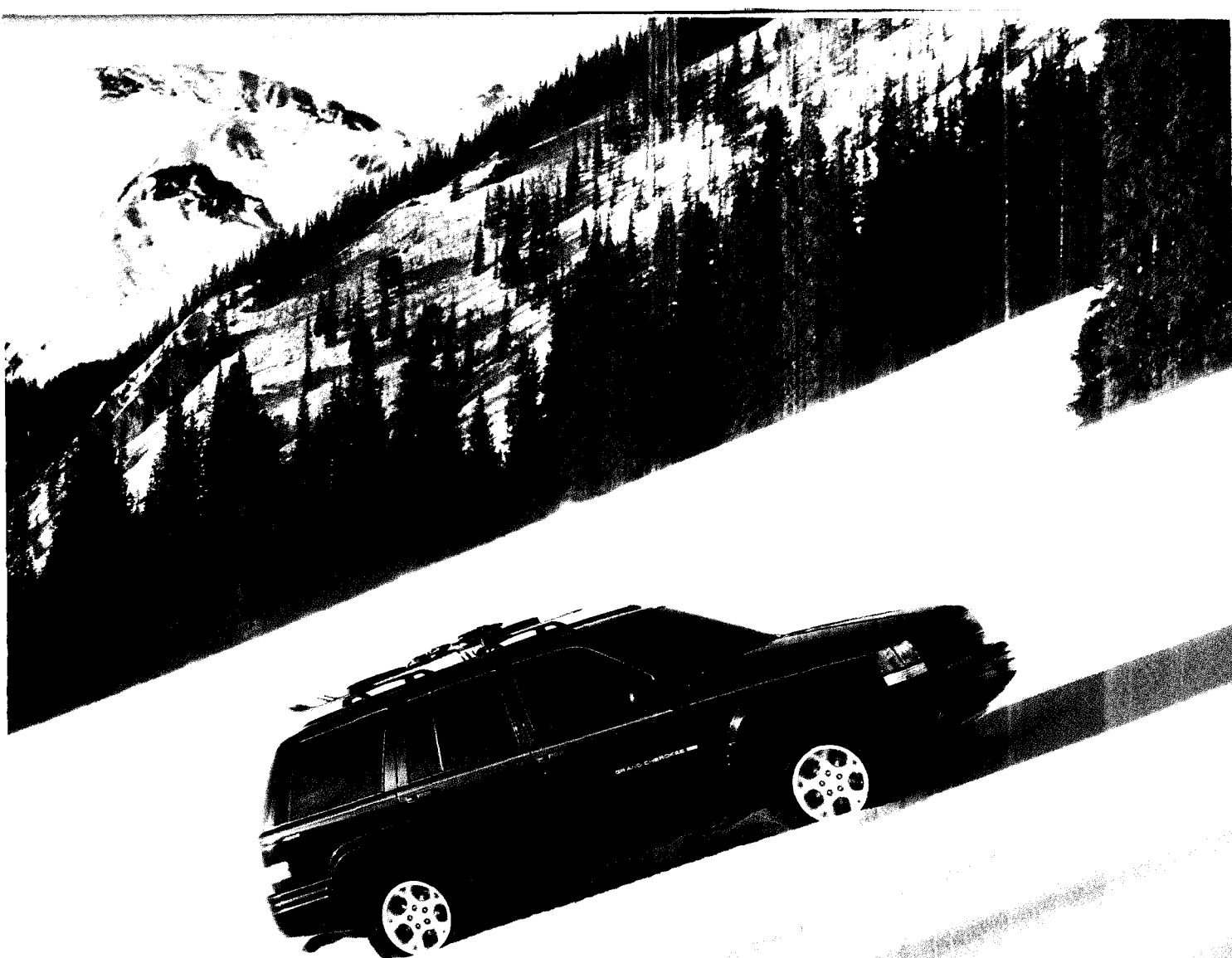
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T H E R E ' S O N L Y O N E

Classical Music

BY AUSTIN BAER

AN ASIAN INVASION

Pianists have no shortage of concertos to choose from. Still, the appearance of a significant new one is no everyday affair. Daniel Asia's, commissioned by a consortium of seven regional American orchestras and given its premiere in Grand Rapids in 1995, aspires to a place in the grand tradition. Like the standard classical concerto, it is



Daniel Asia

in three movements, and like a handful of supreme exemplars, it runs long. Commissioned at thirty minutes, the Asia Piano Concerto clocks in at nearly forty, to the first presenter's frank dismay. "They're Beethoven and Brahms," one conductor, unappeased by precedent, needlessly pointed out to the composer. "You're Asia." Critics and audiences are giving the piece a warmer welcome. The fast, angular outer movements, built on rhythmically charged cells of melody, have the energy of the fashionable minimalists without their impoverished imagination. The unusual, slow inner movement begins in a grippingly sustained crescendo that seems destined either to reverse itself or to explode. Instead it gives way to a seductive meditation of a distinctly Middle Eastern cast, tinged with a richer chromatism, which spills over into the high-voltage finale. This month the pianist Jonathan Shames, with the all-Asia disc *Ivory* to his credit (on the Koch label), assays the concerto with the Chattanooga Symphony Orchestra (January 23 and 24; 423-267-8583). A New Zealand Symphony Orchestra recording with André-Michel Schub, who chose Asia for the commission, is due this spring (also on Koch). Exposure by the box-office virtuosi with America's Big Five orchestras is overdue.

Austin Baer is a writer based in New York.

ART FOR OPERA'S SAKE

Against the high-concept machinery of so much contemporary opera production, the faux-naïf clarity of David Hockney's designs stands as a bracing antidote. When first unveiled, back in the eighties, at the Los Angeles Music Center Opera, the jewel-toned decor of Richard Wagner's *Tristan*



The multi-talented Hockney

and *Isolde* ranked with the artist's most attractive achievements: part Classic Comics, part Book of Hours. For lack of a congenial director, however, the show foundered. In fairness, the opera is long on rapture but short on action—a paean to a forbidden love that transcends life

itself—and in abstract surroundings, emotionally charged stasis is a viable option. But there is a story here, and Hockney's setting implied that it would be told. This season the artist has elected, for the first time in his career, to take up the reins as director. The new role is risky: in the main, opera singers are neither the most pliant nor

the most imaginative actors in the world. Still, Hockney's manifest passion for the work should prompt the cast's most willing efforts, and if the reality falls short of the production Hockney sees in his head, we are unlikely ever to get closer (January 29–February 18; 213-972-8001).

A BICENTENNIAL SCHUBERT CELEBRATION

Whether a genius is honored more by splendid isolation or by placement within a context is a question impossible to settle. It comes to mind in connection with the bicentennial of the birth of Franz Schubert, who achieved immortality in a mere thirty-one years. At home and at Carnegie Hall, Christoph von Dohnányi and the Cleveland Orchestra celebrate with imaginative programs featuring three of



The birthday gentleman

Schubert's most glorious symphonies along with a selection of his songs; Berio's *Rendering*, which fuses fragments of authentic Schubert in a strange but wonderful post-modern frame; and music of Mahler, who for all his idiosyncrasies owes to

Schubert a debt beyond reckoning. (For dates and tickets in Cleveland call 216-231-1111; for Carnegie Hall call 212-247-7800.) At Lincoln Center's Avery Fisher Hall, Kurt Masur and the New York Philharmonic contribute a straight-ahead all-Schubert program (January 30–February 1; 212-721-6500). The birthday itself falls on January 31, when both Carnegie and Avery Fisher

Halls resound to the astral strains of the C-major symphony deservedly known as "The Great." Many encores follow. In February at Carnegie Hall the Ensemble Wien puts forward Schubert at his most sociable, in the company of other Viennese purveyors of ballroom dances (February 7); and Emanuel Ax provocatively juxtaposes Schubert and Liszt, offering (among much else) four of Liszt's so-called transcriptions of Schubert songs—in actuality, bewitching virtuoso fantasias that wrap Schubert's soulfulness in the magic cloak of Liszt's Mephistophelean dazzle (February 21).

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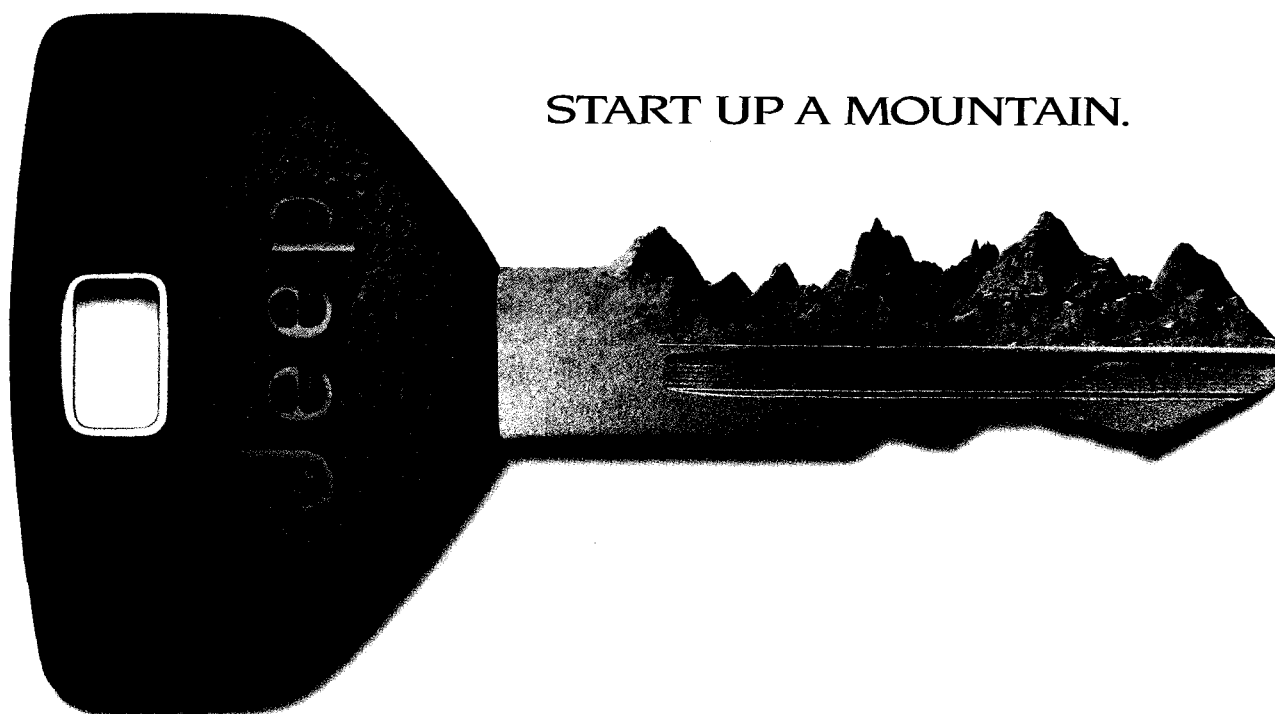
In January explore the wonders of the natural world courtesy of Jeep, the sponsor of this month's Arts & Entertainment Preview and innovative programming on cable. On The Family Channel watch *American Adventure*—an exciting ride through three national parks (January 15 at 8:00 P.M.). For more outdoor thrills catch *Explorer* on TBS (January 26 at 7:00 P.M.). The answer to December's A&E Challenge—"What 1970s rock opera is based on the life of Jesus of Nazareth?"—is *Jesus Christ Superstar*. Congratulations to November's winner, Arthur M. Jester Jr., of Lexington, KY.

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JIM MCHUGH

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(Continued from page 22)

establish complex manufacturing enterprises. Finally, it is now showing solid annual economic growth, and has already started investing again in its infrastructure. As the Cuban economy grows, companies from everywhere in the world—except the United States—will be selling consumer products, running resorts, and investing in agriculture, tourism, mining, and manufacturing. U.S. firms should not expect that much of the economic pie will be left for them five years from now—or even two.

The U.S. embargo has cost Cuba a lot, but it has neither crippled the Cuban economy nor undermined Castro's leadership. And the embargo not only has failed to persuade the international community that Cuba should be "punished" but in fact has isolated *us* within the world community. The Torricelli bill of

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1992 and the Helms-Burton bill of last year are widely considered to violate international law, in that they claim jurisdiction over—and the right to impose penalties on—foreign companies that choose to do business with Cuba. Because of the Torricelli bill the United States has been condemned by ever larger margins by the United Nations General Assembly each year since 1992 for interfering in Cuba's trade with other nations. The most recent vote, last November, was a scathing 138 to 3.

The Helms-Burton bill, which President Clinton signed into law last March, has alienated U.S. trading partners and allies further. The bill permits U.S. lawsuits against foreign companies if they make use of any property in Cuba that was confiscated from anyone who is now a U.S. citizen. If a Cuban plantation owner emigrated to the United States in 1959, and thirty-five years later a Spanish company

built a hotel on the old plantation site, the émigré, if a U.S. citizen, can sue the Spanish company in a U.S. court for "trafficking in confiscated property." Thus the U.S. court is exercising jurisdiction over actions of a foreign company that took place in a foreign land, for the benefit of someone who was at the time of his loss a foreign citizen. Furthermore, the bill denies U.S. entry visas to executives of foreign companies (and their spouses and children) if their employers do business in Cuba involving properties that were owned by U.S. nationals prior to the revolution. The State Department has already denied visas to Canadian and Mexican business executives along with their families.

Helms-Burton in principle could force corporations from Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Great Britain, Italy, Mexico, Spain, and other countries simply to abandon their hotels, mines, and other investments in Cuba or to pay millions in damages to the prior owners from the 1950s.

Consequently the State Department predicted that the Helms-Burton legislation would have a "chilling effect" on Cuban commerce. But so far it has not. There have been few confirmed cases of companies pulling out, and there is every indication that the economic recovery continues to be solid. Last July, Cuba's Vice President announced that the nation's GDP for the first six months of the year grew by 9.6 percent. Even after the devastation done to the crops by Hurricane Lili in October, the GDP for 1996 is expected to show growth of at least five percent. Furthermore, Cuba has put in place new laws that will make foreign investment even more attractive. Last June, Cuba enhanced foreign companies' incentives to trade with the island when the National Assembly passed a law reducing tariffs on imported goods. A few weeks later the National Assembly passed another law, establishing free-trade zones and industrial parks, where businesses will receive huge tax breaks.

In recent years the United States has invoked international law to justify both the Persian Gulf War and the invasion of Panama. However, because of Helms-Burton now we are being widely condemned for violating international law and major trade accords such as GATT and NAFTA.

Last July, President Clinton tried to stave off the fury of U.S. allies and trading partners by suspending the implementation of the most controversial provisions of Helms-Burton for six months, although they are still valid law. Not surprisingly, our European trading partners have continued to show "unadulterated, undiluted anger," in the words of Stuart Eizenstat, of the Commerce Department. Last fall the European Union brought an action against the United States before the World Trade Organization. This was followed by retaliatory legislation from all fifteen EU states, prohibiting European countries from obeying the Helms-Burton provisions and permitting them to countersue American companies in European courts to recover any financial penalties imposed by U.S. courts. Canada and Mexico passed retaliatory legislation as well.

In the meantime, U.S. business is losing out: it is conservatively estimated that if the Cuban embargo were lifted today, the United States could export goods worth \$1–\$2 billion annually to the island. American goods have been making their way to Cuban consumers by a variety of routes for years—U.S. companies sell goods to a non-U.S. distributor, who sells them to Cuba, or the goods are sometimes just smuggled in. Coca-Cola, California wines, Mr. Clean, Gerber baby food, Sylvania light bulbs, Quaker Oats—all can be found in Cuba. U.S. companies are clearly eager to set up shop in Cuba. In 1990 representatives of more than 400 U.S. businesses visited Cuba; in 1995, 1,300 businesses visited. General Motors, Sears Roebuck, Avis, Hyatt, ITT Sheraton, Bank of Boston, Gillette, and Radisson Hotels are among the U.S. companies that have sent CEOs and representatives to Havana to look into future business opportunities. Dozens of U.S. firms have already signed letters of intent to do business if the embargo is lifted.

Up to this point both Congress and Clinton have been more interested in condemning Castro than in abiding by international law. But the furious protests from our major trading partners lead one to wonder how long Congress and the Administration can hold out. In this new game of chicken that we are playing with Cuba, the smart money in the international business community may well be on Cuba. ☼

JOHN SUTTON



Good News!

From Boston to San Francisco the community-based housing movement is transforming bad neighborhoods

IN 1983 the makers of *The Day After*, a made-for-television movie about the aftermath of a nuclear holocaust, filmed part of their drama in an inner-city neighborhood in Kansas City whose forlorn, rubble-strewn landscape seemed the perfect image of a fictional ground zero. Today that same site is a develop-

by Alexander von Hoffman

ment that includes 300 units of low- and moderate-income housing, three shopping centers, and a library. No new government program brought about this remarkable transformation; rather, a private local nonprofit organization, the Community Development Corporation of Kansas City, took the initiative.

Parkview Commons, condominiums for low- and moderate-income families, in San Francisco

The revival of this once-forsaken piece of Kansas City real estate is part of a little-celebrated but widespread campaign by community and

nonprofit organizations to build low-income housing and revitalize inner-city neighborhoods across the United States. Unlike conventional government housing programs, the new housing movement is based in the communities it seeks to help, relies as much on private as on public funding, and produces homes that could be mistaken for upscale condos. It aims to engage the poor in improving their own lives. In an era of hostility to government the community-based approach to housing has wide political appeal. Along with Senator Carol Moseley-Braun, of Illinois, and other liberal Democrats, such staunch Republicans as Senator Kit Bond, of Missouri; Congressman Rick Lazio, of New York; and even Governor Kirk Fordice, of Mississippi, a rock-ribbed Reagan conservative, have publicly endorsed the community-based housing movement. Yet, strangely, it has eluded public awareness. It is making a visible impact on low-income neighborhoods all over the country, but the question remains whether it can survive, much less conquer the monumental problems of the inner city.

The movement originated in the 1960s but first took root in the 1970s, when job and population flight, disinvestment, arson, drugs, crime, and disease were ravaging many urban neighborhoods. As these destructive forces spread to large urban public-housing projects, Charles Murray and other conservatives concluded that government social programs had actually caused the chaos. In the early 1980s the federal government, under President Ronald Reagan, began slashing the funds available for subsidized housing.

Today the federal government has all but ceased to build low-income housing, and just last year President Bill Clinton signed a bill that stopped granting rent subsidies to new applicants. Meanwhile, rising housing costs take ever larger

bites of the limited wages of the working poor: by 1993 one fifth of the nation's unsubsidized renters paid half or more of their income for shelter. In this grim context new initiatives in the housing field have become crucial.

In response to the federal retreat from housing, groups of private citizens set out to create islands of safety and comfort in some of the toughest slums in the

1960s, to encourage business activity in inner-city ghettos, but the vast majority concentrate on housing.

Unlike public housing, community-based housing exists in the private market; its developers must at least break even in order to survive and carry out their ambitious agendas. Thus they seek both public and private sources of funding. In collaborative meetings—or, occa-

sionally, in dramatic confrontations—local housing groups wheedle loans, grants, and free land and utilities from city, state, and federal officials.

Special kinds of nonprofit organizations, known as intermediaries, raise private funds and funnel them to hundreds of local housing and community developers across the United States. By acting as a combination of broker, credit-rating service, and rich uncle, two large intermediaries have emerged as powerhouses in the movement. The Local Initiatives Support Corporation, or LISC,

ensure that they perform as promised. One reason that LISC and Enterprise can persuade businesses to provide capital to small community organizations is that low-income housing is, generally, profitable. With the help of tax benefits, especially the Federal Low Income Housing Tax Credit (which housing developers earn and then sell to investors), investments yield an average annual return of about 16 percent over fifteen years. Attracted by such earnings, hard-nosed business investors, including Warren Buffett, the celebrated financier, have plunged into housing for the poor.

Some critics dislike all the high finance and charge that community-based housing is simply a money racket. Old-style champions of public housing and direct housing subsidies object to the syndication of tax credits and other development deals, because the transaction costs benefit lawyers and accountants. Yet in a climate of government reductions and budget cutbacks a housing system under the direct control of public or semi-public agencies is simply not a viable alternative. The days of well-funded centralized programs are not about to return anytime soon.

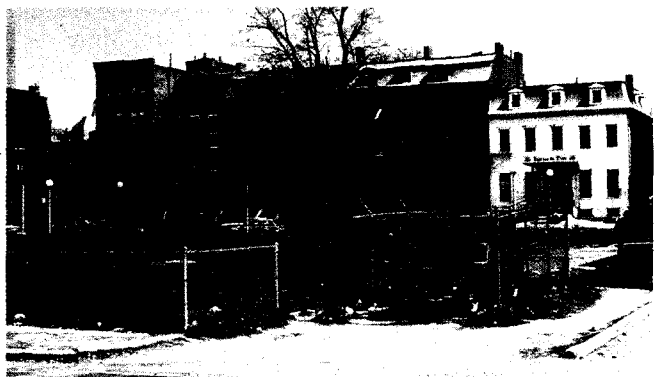
In fact the combination of self-sufficiency, good management, local control, and profitability gives the private-public approach to low-income housing a powerful political appeal that government housing programs never had. Wooed by LISC and Enterprise, executives of the Weyerhaeuser Company, Hallmark Cards, Bank of America, and other corporations have become ardent supporters of the housing movement.

THE best-known nonprofit housing organization is Habitat for Humanity. Founded by Millard Fuller, a devout former businessman, in 1976, to witness the Christian gospel by building simple but adequate housing for the poor, and often associated with Jimmy Carter, who is probably its most famous supporter, Habitat organizes volunteers to help low-income people literally build houses for themselves. Critics dismiss Habitat as insignificant, on the grounds that its local chapters are highly decentralized and build only a few houses at a time. But it has some 1,300 local chapters in the United States, and volunteer work on Habitat projects is increasingly popular,

STEVE ROSENTHAL



GOODY, CLANCY & ASSOCIATES



Langham Court, in Boston's South End (above), and the site before redevelopment (below)

country. There are now about 4,000 local housing organizations in the United States. Since 1988 they have developed more than 20,000 homes a year for low-income Americans. In 1994 community-based groups built approximately 40,000 units—equivalent to the rates of production achieved by the government during the heyday of public housing.

The organizations that produce and manage low-income housing differ markedly from the rigid centralized bureaucracies that run most government housing programs. Community-development corporations, which are chartered nonprofit associations, figure prominently among the producers of low-income housing. CDCs were first created in the

was started by the Ford Foundation as a permanent institution for helping distressed neighborhoods. James Rouse's Enterprise Foundation, one of the foremost national housing organizations, founded by the head of the Rouse Company, an innovative development company, was designed to give the housing movement economy of scale. Each organization maintains a national headquarters and multiple branch offices and raises millions of dollars each year from foundations and corporate donors. (Also, the Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation, created by Congress as a public nonprofit corporation, maintains an extensive network of local housing organizations.)

Both LISC and Enterprise create pools of housing-project deals that they offer to philanthropists and investors; the intermediaries then monitor the community groups responsible for the projects to

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especially among Protestant congregations. Thus Habitat for Humanity regularly ranks as one of the largest homebuilders in the United States.

Habitat is national—indeed, international—in scope, but regional housing organizations, working on their own or with community groups, also develop impressive amounts of low-income housing. Started in Boston at the dawn of the

tions whose original purpose was other than housing. In the sprawling inner-city district made famous by the Rodney King riots, Concerned Citizens of South Central Los Angeles was started in 1985 to fight the construction of a giant waste incinerator, but it has since developed and now manages more than a hundred units of low-income housing. The primary and still radical goal of the Industrial Areas Foundation, founded by the late Saul Alinsky, is to organize disenfranchised people so that they can seize power for themselves; yet the powerful coalitions of church and community organizations that the IAF has launched also build homes for low-income citizens in cities such as New York and Baltimore.

Even commercial firms, albeit socially committed ones, build low-income housing: McCormack Baron & Associates, of St. Louis, a leader among for-profit residential builders in urban areas, works on large-scale redevelopment projects across the country. Telesis Corporation, of Washington, D.C., is administering court-ordered low-income housing developments in Dallas and Yonkers among its other projects.

Two ironclad rules influence the appearance of the new housing. First, the architecture must not look anything like the uniform barracks and high-rise slabs of conventional public-housing projects. Second, the buildings must be well maintained: managers take pride in making quick repairs, and no graffiti are allowed to mar the walls. Several of the housing groups hire neighborhood youths as guards and maintenance men to ensure that their property is not vandalized.

Although cost constraints and the desire to make low-income housing look inconspicuous give many projects a bland appearance, architects have also

produced stylish buildings that could easily be mistaken for upmarket residential developments. David Baker has designed two striking low- and moderate-income condominium projects in San Francisco for BRIDGE: Parkview Commons, hillside apartments with Mediterranean clay-tile roofs; and Holloway Terrace, two-story houses with sculptured white-stucco walls. Working in Boston, Goody, Clancy & Associates used traditional Boston brick and tall bay windows to make Langham Court, a mixed-income project, fit into the Victorian South End neighborhood.

Perhaps the best-known architect specializing in low-income housing is Michael Pyatok, of Oakland, California, who despite small budgets manages to create comfortable living spaces, safe and inviting interior courts, and attractive exteriors composed of bays and trellises. His work ranges from James Lee Court, an apartment block with earth-colored stucco walls decorated with colorful African patterns, which houses twenty-six formerly homeless families in Oakland, to what he mockingly calls a "Ralph Lauren-style" suburban development for mixed incomes in Bellevue, Washington, which looks for all the world like an exclusive subdivision.

Always struggling with zoning restrictions and the fears of suburbanites, Pyatok has learned to be clever. In the face of a requirement that each unit have two parking spaces (although the families could afford one car at most), Pyatok persuaded a zoning board to allow the extra parking spaces to be used as a basketball court. To lend a reassuring single-family image to a low-income multi-family project, he resorted to picket fences, individual entries, and chimney-like cupolas that hid telltale bunches of ventilation pipes.

NEIGHBORS aside, the primary goal is to give poor people themselves a sense of pride and a stake in the community. To do so, many housing groups promote homeownership. In Michigan, for example, Kalamazoo Neighborhood Housing Services coordinates second-mortgage lending programs with down payments as low as \$1,000, offers home-rehabilitation loans, and gives classes to first-time homeowners in budgeting and repairs.

MICHAEL PYATOK



GLENNA LANG



The exterior (above) and courtyard (below) of James Lee Court, in Oakland, a development for the homeless

housing movement, The Community Builders has in the past thirty-three years developed more than 8,300 units of low- and moderate-income housing. It currently man-

ages 4,445 units in the northeastern United States, and has about 4,000 more units on the way. In the San Francisco Bay area BRIDGE Housing Corporation has helped to produce about 7,000 units throughout California over the past thirteen years. The New York City Housing Partnership, founded in 1982 by David Rockefeller, has worked with private capital and the state and city governments to build 13,000 new homes in fifty low-income communities throughout the five boroughs of New York City.

The movement has drawn in organiza-

Other groups, among them The Resurrection Project, in the Pilsen neighborhood of Chicago, build and sell one- and two-family houses. Suburban ranch houses have begun to appear in low-income urban neighborhoods, thanks to Habitat for Humanity, which builds a basic version, and to the Mid-Bronx Desperadoes (officially, MBD Community Housing Corporation), which sponsored the construction of classic ranches on Charlotte Street, where both Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan stopped to view the desolation of the South Bronx.

Most housing groups build and sell only a few houses at a time, but East Brooklyn Congregations, a federation of churches organized by the Industrial Areas Foundation, has taken a radically different approach. It pioneered the Nehemiah Plan in the East New York and Brownsville sections of Brooklyn. Named by Johnny Ray Youngblood, a Brooklyn minister, after the Old Testament prophet who rebuilt Jerusalem, the Nehemiah Plan aims to construct and sell very inexpensive homes en masse to the working poor, thus literally building an entire community of homeowners. Since 1982 East Brooklyn Congregations has constructed and sold about 2,150 two-story single-family row houses; another 1,250 are in the works.

As a result, an urban Levittown now flourishes in what was one of the poorest and most troubled parts of New York City. The homeowners—church members, former public-housing tenants, and longtime neighborhood residents—scrupulously maintain their property. A visitor cannot help being struck by the contrast between the Nehemiah houses—whose owners have adorned them with doves, lions, and other front-gate statuary, manicured front lawns, and rooftop satellite dishes—and the anonymous graffiti-scarred high-rise public-housing projects in an adjoining district.

Some housing advocates slight the Nehemiah Plan for taking a no-frills approach and creating a low population density in an urban area, but the real-estate market reflects the popular judgment on the plan and its neighborhoods: row houses that originally sold for \$39,000 to \$62,000 are now valued at \$125,000.

Despite their different approaches, the developers of low-income housing share certain basic assumptions. They fervent-

ly believe that their organizations must be run as competent business enterprises, that their housing developments should encourage self-sufficiency and self-improvement among the low-income residents, and that local control is the key to their success.

STILL, despite this record of success, the question remains whether the movement can do more than make a dent in a daunting problem. Skeptics scoff at the notion that it can solve the rampant problems of the inner city any more than the government's War on Poverty could during the 1960s. Even people within the movement complain that some narrowly focused or poorly organized CDCs take years to build a few units of housing and then do little else. The funding process is complex and time-consuming: whereas commercial developers generally obtain financing from one or two lenders, community-based developers may need the participation of a dozen sources, each with different criteria for approval. And because of its grassroots nature, the movement has spread unevenly. It has yet to reach some smaller cities and parts of the South and Midwest.

People at LISC and Enterprise have responded by training community leaders in management and planning in order to "build capacity" in local organizations. There are signs of progress: the number of housing groups that have each produced more than a hundred units is climbing. If funders would adopt uniform application forms for loans and grants, the housing movement could streamline funding. Above all, housing advocates must protect the Low Income Housing Tax Credit, federal block grants, and other financial sources, which are the lifeblood of so many housing developments.

Pessimists overlook the role that community-based housing groups can play in helping to revive inner-city neighborhoods as stable working-class districts. Having lost population and buildings, inner-city neighborhoods are ripe for redevelopment. Left to themselves, they will continue to deteriorate or else gentrify as real-estate developers move in to make a killing. However, upwardly mobile African-Americans and immigrants who live in or adjacent to depressed neighborhoods contribute stability and

economic resources to the inner city. Most important, the movement is able to tap the strong desire of many poor people to overcome the problems of poverty and improve their lot in life. Wherever it has advanced, the sense of hope and optimism is almost palpable.

In the South Bronx, once an international symbol of urban crime and devastation, a concerted rebuilding campaign



RONALD L. GLASSMAN

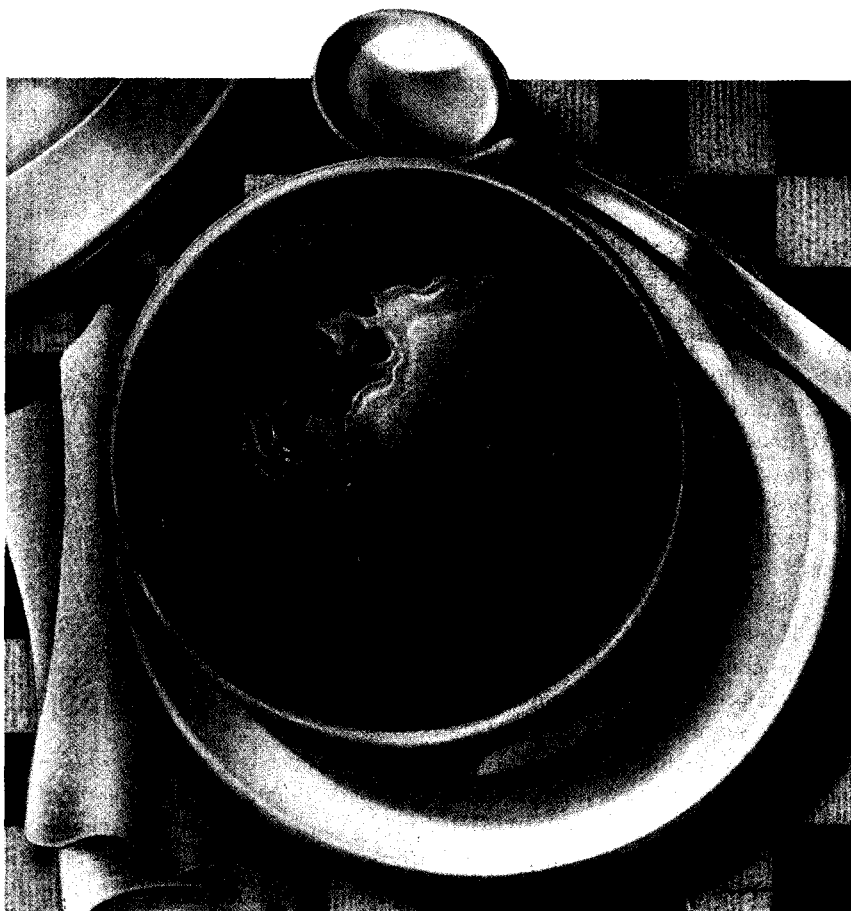
by dozens of housing and community groups and the city government has created vital neighborhoods completely at odds with im-

A portion of the community center at Jacqueline Denise Davis Court, in the South Bronx

ages of despair. On 165th Street stands a grand old apartment building renovated two years ago by the Morrisania Revitalization Corporation and renamed Jacqueline Denise Davis Court. Today it houses people with very low incomes; about a third of the residents were homeless prior to moving in.

Despite their poverty, the occupants of this building are engaged in community life as never before. The tenant association runs its own building patrol and, from a table in the brightly restored foyer, checks everyone who enters the front door. The tenants hold bake sales and throw building parties on holidays. They organized a successful phone-and-mail campaign to persuade the transit authority to restore bus service in front of the building after a ten-year hiatus.

Places like Jacqueline Denise Davis Court are sprouting up all over the country. Although often unheralded, these small triumphs are the most powerful argument for community-based housing. There is new life at the ground zeroes of urban America. ☛



The World as Your Oyster

How to eat well anywhere you go

I OFTEN interrupt friends back from a trip as they recount just what they ate and where. "What did you see?" I ask defensively, assuming they're giving me only the culinary news because I write about food. But on they go, about the cloud-soft gnocchi they had north of Venice, or the beef braised in beer in Brussels, or the spring-lamb stew in County Cork—all in restaurants they hadn't known about before leaving, whose discovery added mightily to their holiday pleasures. Food matters on trips, for the non-food-obsessed, too.

I'm very cautious, though, when someone planning a trip asks if I know any

good restaurants. One person's exciting discovery is another's disaster. Even if I know the city or region well, I reply not with a list of names but with a series of questions. I like to help people decide what they're really after, and then think who can best direct them to it—the same thing I do while traveling. Yes, people who write about food make it their business to collect inside tips on whose chef bears watching, what landmarks have lost their luster, and which hole in the wall must not be missed. But those recommendations could be out of date, and even food critics—especially food critics—vary widely in their tastes.

by Corby Kummer

Serendipity plays a big part in any trip; here are a few ways I've learned to make your own serendipity.

BE specific. If you want typical food, don't just mention to a friend or a sympathetic stranger at your destination that you want local cuisine. Ask how many regions of the country are represented in the city's restaurants, and what the differences are between the various styles of cooking. While following the response you'll quickly sense which is the person's favorite, and which is likeliest to be yours.

With few exceptions the first restaurants you'll hear about when you ask for recommendations will be the fanciest and most famous. If you seek elegant dining with attentive service, or if you're entertaining on business, pay attention. If simplest is best and price counts, say so. Your informant will have to stop and think, and second-tier recommendations are usually of greater interest.

Do you want to see the people who really live in a place rather than other tourists, or do you want to try superior native cuisine? The desires can be incompatible. I often dine where people tell me fashionable and arty types go; I'm rewarded with good people-watching, but after many such evenings I wind up with too much smoke in my clothes, too much money charged to my credit card, and nothing more interesting to eat than smoked salmon and steak frites while I observe.

The problem with following the in crowd is that locals, especially those who eat out a lot, want a change from the food their town is known for. So many people in Stockholm, for instance, told me to go to Fredsgatan 12, a storefront bistro whose chef has built a reputation as one of the city's best, that I rearranged my itinerary to accept the only available reservation. The menu, handwritten in gold on black paper, told me I had come to the kind of restaurant that uses Asian fruits and Italian pasta and French sauce-making techniques. The result is a latter-day "Continental cuisine" (the catchall phrase for French-based food associated with cruise liners and hotel ballrooms), not at all specific to one small place—as,



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to my mind, the most interesting cooking is. The Boss-clad patrons were small consolation: I was just getting to know and like the traditional uses of herring, brown bread, lake-caught whitefish, and lingonberries, and I wanted the old but not the stodgy. After I reconfigured my questions, friends pointed me to Erik's Bakficka, a cheerful bistro in a central residential neighborhood where the menu was far less ambitious but recognizably Swedish (a cuisine that, it must be admitted, includes some stodge). Trendy places and landmark restaurants do show what the residents of a city are wearing and how they behave; but it's probably better to save them for a drink before or after dinner.

Naturally, you'll need to consider the source of a recommendation. There are two schools of thought about asking hotel concierges or front-desk clerks (the easiest and first choices, besides taxi drivers) where to eat. The cynical view is that concierges are paid to steer people to certain restaurants, and the rubes foolish enough to look to them deserve what they'll get—something packaged and moribund. That's naive. Part of a concierge's basic training is learning about a wide range of places to eat, including modest hangouts and ethnic places and new spots. If in Paris, for instance, you say you like fish and brasseries and wouldn't mind a change from haute cuisine, a concierge might know to send you to Flora Danica, on the Champs-Élysées, which Parisian friends tell me is the best Danish restaurant outside Denmark, and where, they say, the salmon grilled on one side is extraordinary.

A recommendation for a hotel restaurant needn't be dismissed out of hand. Hotels often invest large sums in showpiece restaurants that either just break even or lose money, and they become magnets not only for resourceless and unimaginative guests but for clever ones and locals, too. Several of the most sought-after restaurants in Paris, for instance, are in hotels. The young chef at Montparnasse 25, in one of the city's two Meridien hotels, is attracting much attention, and the selection of cheeses there is said to be the best in Paris. The very grand Plaza Athénée has an excellent new chef who combines classic dishes with nouvelle cuisine, which

seems to be in the first stages of a revival. A consistently difficult reservation to get is a table at the Hôtel de Crillon.

In the United States a marketing strategy for hotel operators is to invite in an established restaurateur who will attract both visitors and locals. Most people's choice for the best sushi in San Francisco is Kyo-ya, in the Sheraton Palace, which is not part of the hotel. The perennially booked Postrio, owned by the Los Angeles restaurateur Wolfgang Puck, is installed in the Prescott, a hotel it has greatly helped by its popularity. One of my favorite restaurants in the Boston area is Rialto, at the Charles Hotel, in Harvard Square, where Jody Adams cooks Mediterranean-themed dishes and the staff is especially welcoming. This, too, is an independent restaurant: Michela Larson, a co-owner, renounced the headaches of her own Michela's for the convenience of working within a hotel. A few chains, most notably the Four Seasons and Meridien, take special care to make sure their restaurants figure among the city's best, and can outspend the local competition. If the location is convenient and you need to entertain, you could well choose your hotel by its restaurant.

EVEN if you don't come equipped with the phone numbers of local food experts (as my colleagues and I try to do), you can easily find some on your own—just by walking around. My most fertile ground for restaurant recommendations is the fruit markets, gourmet shops, and bakeries I invariably stop at. When I see a shop whose owners take obvious pride in what they do, I ask them where they like to eat. I don't start with "Can you tell me what the best restaurants are here?" That almost always elicits the standard tourist list, often of places the people have heard about but not actually tried. (A significant proportion of respondents to the Zagat surveys, I'm convinced, report what they've read or been told is the best restaurant in town rather than rating highly the place they actually like most.) I ask where they would go with their family if they didn't feel like cooking. Wine merchants, too, usually know a town's restaurants inside out, and wine connoisseurs will assure you that they know far more about food than food experts know about wine.

Not just food and wine merchants are interested in food, of course. If you find an antiques dealer or a bookseller or a design shop whose taste corresponds closely to yours, chances are that the owner's taste in restaurants will too. I've often been steered through accidental meetings and chats to trattorias far more sympathetic than the ones I heard of from colleagues, whose loyalties are stronger to particular local restaurateurs than they are to me. When I was first in Florence, a woman who hand-marbleized paper near the central Mercato San Lorenzo told me about a restaurant, open for lunch only, with laminated tables and a big stove in the back where patrons point to the pot that interests them and are served a plate of one of the two or three stews of the day. I learned much about just how simple Tuscan food is at that stove (it's now behind glass, after government inspectors had their way), and I still stop at Mario out of mixed nostalgia and hunger.

Bringing the conversation around to food can serve to break a tense moment. One evening, freshly arrived in Copenhagen, I was detaining the two women who ran the city's Alitalia office with a complicated ticketing change. Their irritation vanished when I asked where to go for my first Danish pastry and what kind I should order. One of the women said that puffy, buttery, almond-filled wienerbrød more or less kept her living in Denmark, and enumerated the variations I'd have to try, with pinwheel and pretzel shapes and jam and hazelnut fillings. The other told me how she had learned to bake new things for her family, but nothing came close to what she could buy in town. Long after they should have been on their way home, the women insisted on leading me most of the way to La Glace, so that I would reach it before it closed.

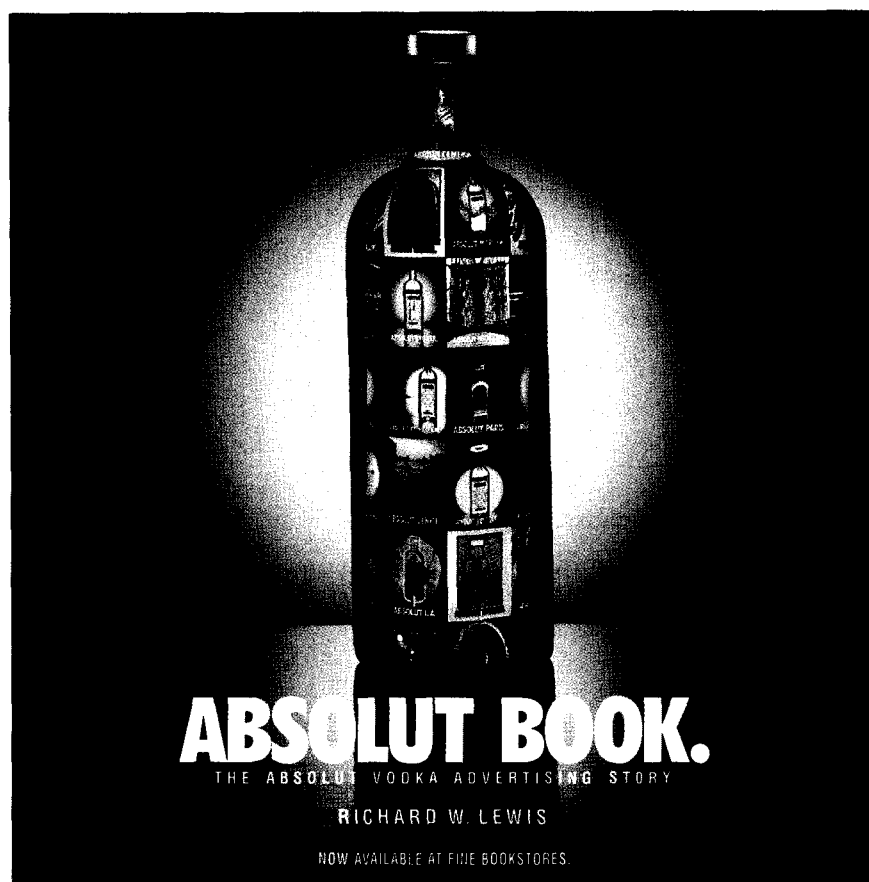
CASING a joint beforehand is the best way to avoid disappointment. "I know it when I see it," a careful eater told me while explaining why he refuses all advice and instead starts walking around when he hits a new town. A café described as characteristic and full of neighborhood locals can be dirty and cramped and sad. Even if the only time you can pass by is in off hours, the attitude of the staff can be indicative.

I make conversation after asking to

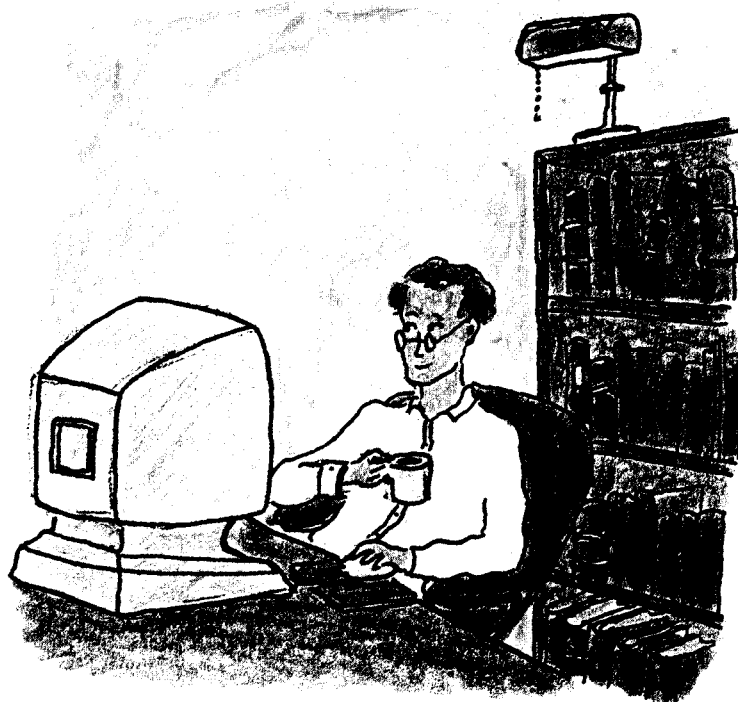
look at the menu: That apple tart on the dessert cart—who made it, and what’s in the crust? The whitefish on the menu—is there much whitefish caught around here? These are admittedly annoying questions for an employee who was looking forward to a few undisturbed hours; but someone at a restaurant that cares about the food will usually describe what’s on offer with enthusiasm. I’ve walked into restaurants where the manager was screaming at a busboy, and walked out. I also walked into, for example, the Brasserie de la Poste, in the fancy Sixteenth Arrondissement of Paris, and was powerfully taken with the group at the one occupied table: the manager, the three waiters, and two cooks. All of them were smoking, drinking beer, and so clearly enjoying each other that I knew I wanted to come back.

In the end, serendipity remains a traveler’s best friend. Getting lost trying to find a museum of folk art or naval history or old stamps can lead you to a place full of locals having a good time; figure out when you can come back, and book a table. Or stop when you see a hand-lettered sign for some local specialty—as I did at the end of a very long drive around the Marches, the Italian region east of Tuscany. CRESCIONE, the awkward red painted letters read on a wooden sign that seemed to be built of oversized popsicle sticks. I vaguely knew crescione to be a puffy filled version of piadina, the region’s famous flatbread, which has lard (my favorite baking fat) in the dough. When I walked into the roadside shack, I found a dozen rickety tables covered not with bread dough but with overhanging sheets of smooth, dark-gold hand-rolled pasta, to be cut into tagliatelle and served with ragu. This pasta would be the restaurant’s last dish, the gray-haired and slow-moving couple I found on the other side of a big pass-through told me. They were closing for good the following day, Sunday, after lunch.

It was not yet dinnertime, but the wizened woman who ran the restaurant said she had to give me a plate of farewell tagliatelle, and started slicing one of the pasta sheets to ribbons. Naturally, I decided that this would be the best pasta I would ever taste. And it was—almost. “Ever” isn’t over: I’m always on the lookout for another ramshackle roadside sign. ☞



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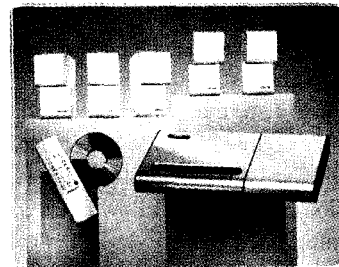
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RUNNING SCARED

by ANTHONY KING



Painfully often the legislation our politicians pass is designed less to solve problems than to protect the politicians from defeat in our never-ending election campaigns. They are, in short, too frightened of us to govern

TO an extent that astonishes a foreigner, modern America is *about* the holding of elections. Americans do not merely have elections on the first Tuesday after the first Monday of November in every year divisible by four. They have elections on the first Tuesday after the first Monday of November in every year divisible by two. In addition, five states have elections in odd-numbered years. Indeed, there is no year in the United States—ever—when a major statewide election is

not being held somewhere. To this catalogue of general elections has of course to be added an equally long catalogue of primary elections (for example, forty-three presidential primaries last year). Moreover, not only do elections occur very frequently in the United States but the number of jobs legally required to be filled by them is enormous—from the presidency of the United States to the post of local consumer advocate in New York. It has been estimated that no fewer than half a million elective offices

are filled or waiting to be filled in the United States today.

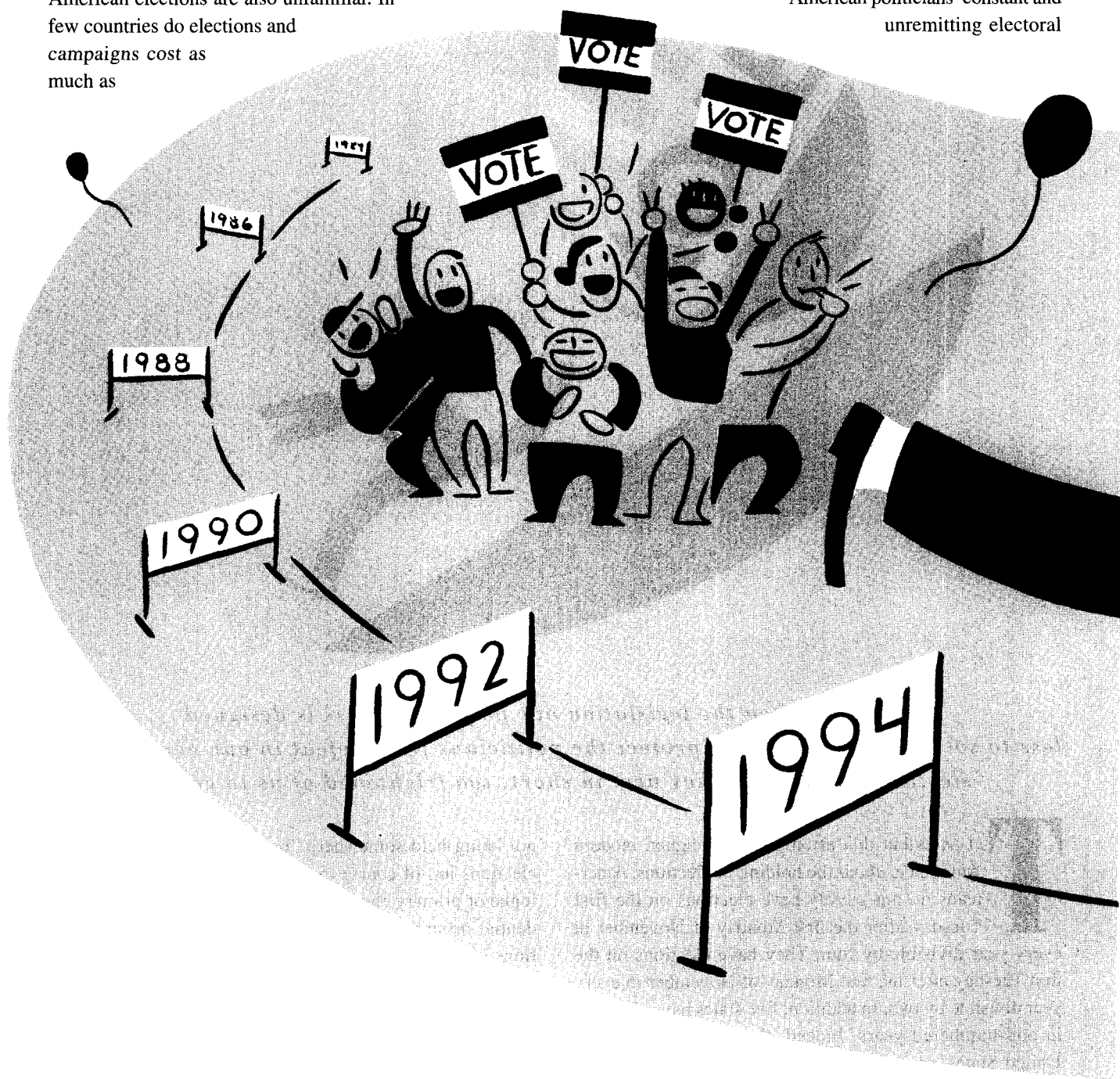
Americans take the existence of their never-ending election campaign for granted. Some like it, some dislike it, and most are simply bored by it. But they are all conscious of it, in the same way that they are conscious of Mobil, McDonald's, *Larry King Live*, Oprah Winfrey, the Dallas Cowboys, the Ford Motor Company, and all the other symbols and institutions that make up the rich tapestry of American life.

To a visitor to America's shores, however, the never-ending campaign presents a largely unfamiliar spectacle. In other countries election campaigns have both beginnings and ends, and there are even periods, often prolonged periods, when no campaigns take place at all. Other features of American elections are also unfamiliar. In few countries do elections and campaigns cost as much as

they do in the United States. In no other country is the role of organized political parties so limited.

America's permanent election campaign, together with other aspects of American electoral politics, has one crucial consequence, little noticed but vitally important for the functioning of American democracy. Quite simply, the American electoral system places politicians in a highly vulnerable position. Individually and collectively they are more vulnerable, more of the time, to the vicissitudes of electoral politics than are the politicians of any other democratic country. Because they are more vulnerable, they devote more of their time to electioneering, and their conduct in office is more continuously governed by electoral considerations. I will argue that

American politicians' constant and unremitting electoral



preoccupations have deleterious consequences for the functioning of the American system. They consume time and scarce resources. Worse, they make it harder than it would otherwise be for the system as a whole to deal with some of America's most pressing problems. Americans often complain that their system is not sufficiently democratic. I will argue that, on the contrary, there is a sense in which the system is too democratic and ought to be made less so.

Although this article is written by a foreigner, a Canadian citizen who happens to live in Great Britain, it is not written in any spirit of moral or intellectual superiority. Americans over the years have had quite enough of Brits and others telling them how to run their affairs. I have no wish to prolong their irritation. What follows is the reflections of a candid friend.

FEAR AND TREMBLING

POLITICS and government in the United States are marked by the fact that U.S. elected officials in many cases have very short terms of office *and* face the prospect of being defeated in primary elections *and* have to run for office more as individuals



than as standard-bearers for their party *and* have continually to raise large sums of money in order to finance their own election campaigns. Some of these factors operate in other countries. There is no other country, however, in which all of them operate, and operate simultaneously. The cumulative consequences, as we shall see, are both pervasive and profound.

The U.S. Constitution sets out in one of its very first sentences that "the House of Representatives shall be composed of members chosen every second year by the people of the several states." When the Founding Fathers decided on such a short term of office for House members, they were setting a precedent that has been followed by no other major democratic country.

In Great Britain, France, Italy, and Canada the constitutional or legal maximum for the duration of the lower house of the national legislature is five years. In Germany and Japan the equivalent term is four years.

Only in Australia and New Zealand, whose institutions are in some

spite the Founders' intentions, the Senate's collective electoral sensibilities increasingly resemble those of the House.

Most Americans seem unaware of the fact, but the direct primary—a government-organized popular election to nominate candidates for public office—is, for better or worse, an institution peculiar to the United States. Neither primary elections nor their functional equivalents exist anywhere else in the democratic world. It goes without saying that their effect is to add a further dimension of uncertainty and unpredictability to the world of American elective politicians.

In most other countries the individual holder of public office, so long as he or she is reasonably conscientious and does not gratuitously offend local or regional party opinion, has no real need to worry about renomination. To be sure, cases of parties refusing to renominate incumbent legislators are not unknown in countries such as France, Germany, and Canada, but they are relatively rare and tend to occur under unusual circumstances. The victims are for the most part old, idle, or alcoholic.

The contrast between the rest of the world and the United States could hardly be more striking. In 1978 no fewer than 104 of the 382 incumbent members of the House of Representatives who sought re-election faced primary opposition.

In the following three elections the figures were ninety-three out of 398 (1980), ninety-eight out of 393 (1982), and 130 out of 409 (1984). More recently, in 1994, nearly a third of all House incumbents seeking re-election, 121 out of 386, had to face primary opposition, and in the Senate the proportion was even higher: eleven out of twenty-six. Even those incumbents who did not face opposition could seldom be certain in advance that they were not going to. The influence—and the possibility—of primaries is pervasive. As we shall see, the fact that incumbents usually win is neither here nor there.

To frequent elections and primary elections must be added another factor that contributes powerfully to increasing the electoral vulnerability of U.S. politicians: the relative lack of what we might call "party cover." In most democratic countries the fate of most politicians depends not primarily on their own endeavors but on the fate—locally, regionally, or nationally—of their party. If their party does well in an election, so do they. If not, not. The individual politician's interests and those of his party are bound together.

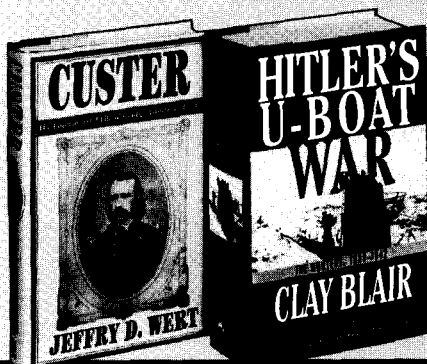
In contrast, America's elective politicians are on their own—not only in relation to politicians in most other countries but also in absolute terms. Party is still a factor in U.S. electoral politics, but it is less so than anywhere else in the democratic world. As a result, American legislators seeking re-election are forced to raise their own profiles, to make their own records, and to fight their own re-election campaigns.

limited respects modeled on those of the United States, are the legal maximums as short as three years. In having two-year terms the United States stands alone.

Members of the Senate are, of course, in a quite different position. Their constitutionally prescribed term of office, six years, is long by anyone's standards. But senators' six-year terms are not all they seem. In the first place, so pervasive is the electioneering atmosphere that even newly elected senators begin almost at once to lay plans for their re-election campaigns. Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, of New York, recalls that when he first came to the Senate, in 1977, his colleagues when they met over lunch or a drink usually talked about politics and policy. Now they talk about almost nothing but the latest opinion polls. In the second place, the fact that under the Constitution the terms of a third of the Senate end every two years means that even if individual senators do not feel themselves to be under continuing electoral pressure, the Senate as a whole does. De-

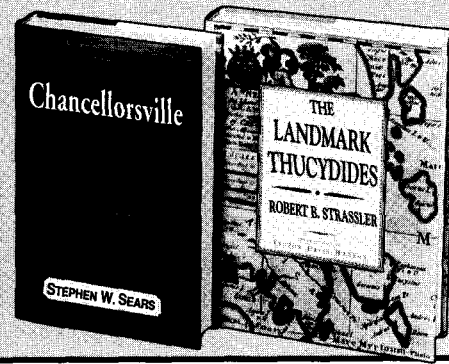
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If politicians are so vulnerable electorally, it may be protested, why aren't more of them defeated? In particular, why aren't more incumbent congressmen and senators defeated? The analysis here would seem to imply a very high rate of turnover in Congress, but in fact the rate—at least among incumbents seeking re-election—is notoriously low. How can this argument and the facts of congressional incumbents' electoral success be reconciled?

This objection has to be taken seriously, because the facts on which it is based are substantially correct. The number of incumbent congressmen and senators defeated in either primary or general elections is low. But to say that because incumbent members of Congress are seldom defeated, they are not really vulnerable electorally is to miss two crucial points. The first is that precisely because they are vulnerable, they go to prodigious lengths to protect themselves. Like workers in nuclear-power stations, they take the most extreme safety precautions, and the fact that the precautions are almost entirely successful does not make them any less necessary.

Second, congressmen and senators go to inordinate lengths to secure re-election because, although they may objectively be safe (in the view of journalists and academic political scientists), they do not *know* they are safe—and even if they think they are, the price of being wrong is enormous. The probability that anything will go seriously wrong with a nuclear-power station may approach zero, but the stations tend nevertheless to be built away from the centers of large cities. A congressman or a senator may believe that he is reasonably safe, but if he wants to be re-elected, he would be a fool to act on that belief.

HOW THEY CAME TO BE VULNERABLE

AERICAN politicians run scared—and are right to do so. And they run more scared than the politicians of any other democratic country—again rightly. How did this come to be so?

The short answer is that the American people like it that way. They are, and have been for a very long time, the Western world's hyperdemocrats. They are keener on democracy than almost anyone else and are more determined that democratic norms and practices should pervade every aspect of national life. To explore the implications of this central fact about the United States, and to see how it came to be, we need to examine two different interpretations of the term "democracy." Both have been discussed from time to time by political philosophers, but they have never been codified and they certainly cannot be found written down in a constitution or any other formal statement of political principles. Nevertheless, one or the other underpins the political practice of every democratic country—even if, inevitably, the abstract conception and the day-to-day practice are never perfectly matched.

One of these interpretations might be labeled "division of labor." In this view, there are in any democracy two classes of people—the governors and the governed. The function of the governors is to take decisions on the basis of what they believe to be in the country's best interests and to act on those decisions. If public opinion broadly supports the decisions, that is a welcome bonus. If not, too bad. The views of

THE LITANY OF DISPARAGEMENT

I drove, but I didn't turn.
I spoke, but I didn't learn.
I warmed, but I didn't burn.
Pray for me now and then.

Cards held too close to my chest,
I loved the roads running west,
Old shoes and a leather vest.
Pray for me now and then.

I never reached my floodmark.
The dog is a distant bark.
The tunnel whirls in the dark.
Pray for me now and then.

The nurse bends low over me.
With hands and skeleton key,
She opens Death's mystery.
Pray for me now and then.

Pray, for the willows must shake.
Ripples must die in the lake.
I am the life I forsake.
Pray for me now and then.

—DICK ALLEN

the people at large are merely one datum among a large number of data that need to be considered. They are not accorded any special status. Politicians in countries that operate within this view can frequently be heard using phrases like “the need for strong leadership” and “the need to take tough decisions.” They often take a certain pride in doing what they believe to be right even if the opinion of the majority is opposed to it.

The function of the governed in such a system, if it is a genuine democracy, is very important but strictly limited. It is not to determine public policy or to decide what is the right thing to do. Rather, it is to go to the polls from time to time to choose those who will determine public policy and decide what the right thing is: namely, the governors. The deciding of issues by the electorate is secondary to the election of the individuals who are to do the deciding. The analogy is with choosing a doctor. The patient certainly chooses which doctor to see but does not normally decide (or even try to decide) on the detailed course of treatment. The division of labor is informal but clearly understood.

It is probably fair to say that most of the world’s major democracies—Great Britain, France, Germany, Japan—operate on this basis. The voters go to the polls every few years, and in between times it is up to the government of the day to get on with governing. Electing a government and governing are two different businesses. Electioneering is, if anything, to be deplored if it gets in the way of governing.

This is a simplified picture, of course. Democratically elected politicians are ultimately dependent on the electorate, and if at the end of the day the electorate does not like what they are doing, they are dead. Nevertheless, the central point remains. The existing division of labor is broadly accepted.

The other interpretation of democracy, the one dominant in America, might be called the “agency” view, and it is wholly different. According to this view, those who govern a country should function as no more than the agents of the people. The job of the governors is not to act independently and to take whatever decisions they believe to be in the national interest but, rather, to reflect in all their actions the views of the majority of the people, whatever those views may be. Governors are not really governors at all; they are representatives, in the very narrow sense of being in office solely to represent the views of those who sent them there.

In the agency view, representative government of the kind common throughout the democratic world can only be second-best. The ideal system would be one in which there were no politicians or middlemen of any kind and the people governed themselves directly; the political system would take the form of more or less continuous town meetings or referenda, perhaps conducted by means of interactive television. Most Americans, at bottom, would still like to see their country governed by a town meeting.

WHY THEIR VULNERABILITY MATTERS

IN this political ethos, finding themselves inhabiting a turbulent and torrid electoral environment, most American elective officials respond as might be expected: in an almost Darwinian way. They adapt their behavior—their roll-call votes, their introduction of bills, their committee assignments, their phone calls, their direct-mail letters, their speeches, their press releases, their sound bites, whom they see, how they spend their time, their trips abroad, their trips back home, and frequently their private and family lives—to their environment: that is, to their primary and overriding need for electoral survival. The effects are felt not only in the lives of individual officeholders and their staffs but also in America’s political institutions as a whole and the shape and content of U.S. public policy.

It all begins with officeholders’ immediate physical environment: with bricks, mortar, leather, and wood paneling. The number of congressional buildings and the size of congressional staffs have ballooned in recent decades. At the start of the 1960s most members of the House of Representatives contented themselves with a small inner office and an outer office; senators’ office suites were not significantly larger. Apart from the Capitol itself, Congress was reasonably comfortably housed in four buildings, known to Washington taxi drivers as the Old and New House and Senate Office Buildings. The designations Old and New cannot be used any longer, however, because there are now so many even newer congressional buildings.

Congressional staffs have grown at roughly the same rate, the new buildings having been built mainly to house the staffs. In 1957 the total number of people employed by members of the House and Senate as personal staff was 3,556. By 1991 the figure had grown to 11,572—a more than threefold increase within the political lifetime of many long-serving members. Last year the total number of people employed by Congress in all capacities, including committee staffs and the staffs of support agencies like the Congressional Research Service, was 32,820, making Congress by far the most heavily staffed legislative branch in the world.

Much of the growth of staff in recent decades has been in response to the growth of national government, to Congress’s insistence on strengthening its policymaking role in the aftermath of Vietnam and Watergate, and to decentralization within Congress, which has led subcommittee chairmen and the subcommittees themselves to acquire their own staffs. But there is no doubt that the increase is also in response to congressional incumbents’ ever-increasing electoral exposure. Congress itself has become an integral part of America’s veritable “elections industry.”

One useful measure of the changes that have taken place—and also an important consequence of the changes—is the in-

creased proportion of staff and staff time devoted to constituent service. As recently as 1972 only 1,189 House employees—22.5 percent of House members' personal staffs—were based in home-district offices. By 1992 the number had more than doubled, to 3,128, and the proportion had nearly doubled, to 42.1 percent. On the Senate side there were only 303 state-based staffers in 1972, making up 12.5 percent of senators' personal staffs, but the number had more than quadrupled by 1992 to 1,368, for fully 31.6 percent of the total. Since a significant proportion of the time of Washington-based congressional staffs is also devoted to constituent service, it is a fair guess that more than half of the time of all congressional staffs is now given over to nursing the district or state rather than to legislation and policymaking.

Much constituent service is undoubtedly altruistic, inspired by politicians' sense of duty (and constituents' understandable frustration with an unresponsive bureaucracy); but at the same time nobody doubts that a large proportion of it is aimed at securing re-election. The statistics on the outgoing mail of members of Congress and their use of the franking privilege point in that direction too. Congressional mailings grew enormously in volume from some 100 million pieces a year in the early 1960s to more than 900 million in 1984—nearly five pieces of congressional mail for every adult American.) New restrictions on franking introduced in the 1990s have made substantial inroads into that figure, but not surprisingly the volume of mail emanating from both houses of Congress is still invariably higher in election years.

The monetary costs of these increases in voter-oriented congressional activities are high: in addition to being the most heavily staffed legislative branch in the world, Congress is also the most expensive. But there is another, non-monetary cost: the staffs themselves become one of the congressman's or senator's constituencies, requiring management, taking up time, and always being tempted to go into business for themselves. American scholars who have studied the burgeoning of congressional staffs express concern about their cumulative impact on Congress as a deliberative body in which face-to-face communication between members, and between members and their constituents, facilitates both mutual understanding and an understanding of the issues. Largely in response to the requirements of electioneering, more and more congressional business is conducted through dense networks of staffers.

One familiar effect of American politicians' vulnerability is the power it accords to lobbyists and special-interest groups, especially those that can muster large numbers of votes or have large amounts of money to spend on campaigns. Members of Congress walk the electoral world alone. They can be picked off one by one, they know it, and they adjust their behavior accordingly. The power of the American Association of Retired Persons, the National Rifle Association, the banking industry, and the various veter-

ans' lobbies is well known. It derives partly from their routine contributions to campaign funds and the quality of their lobbying activities in Washington, but far more from the votes that the organizations may be able to deliver and from congressmen's and senators' calculations of how the positions they take in the present may affect their chances of re-election in the future—a future that rarely is distant. Might a future challenger be able to use that speech against me? Might I be targeted for defeat by one of the powerful lobbying groups?

A second effect is that American politicians are even more likely than those in other countries to engage in symbolic politics: to use words masquerading as deeds, to take actions that purport to be instrumental but are in fact purely rhetorical. A problem exists; the people demand that it be solved; the politicians cannot solve it and know so; they engage in an elaborate pretense of trying to solve it nevertheless, often at great expense to the taxpayers and almost invariably at a high cost in terms of both the truth and the politicians' own reputations for integrity and effectiveness. The politicians lie in most cases not because they are liars or approve of lying but because the potential electoral costs of not lying are too great.

At one extreme, symbolic politics consists of speechmaking and public position-taking in the absence of any real action or any intention of taking action; casting the right vote is more important than achieving the right outcome. At the other extreme, symbolic politics consists of whole government programs that are ostensibly designed to achieve one set of objectives but are actually designed to achieve other objectives (in some cases simply the re-election of the politicians who can claim credit for them).

Take as an example the crime bills passed by Congress in the 1980s and 1990s, with their mandatory-minimum sentences, their three-strikes-and-you're-out provisions, and their extension of the federal death penalty to fifty new crimes. The anti-drug and anti-crime legislation, by the testimony of judges and legal scholars, has been at best useless and at worst wholly pernicious in its effects, in that it has filled prison cells not with violent criminals but with drug users and low-level drug pushers. As for the death penalty, a simple measure of its sheer irrelevance to the federal government's war on crime is easily provided. The last federal offender to be put to death, Victor H. Feguer, a convicted kidnapper, was hanged in March of 1963. By the end of 1995 no federal offender had been executed for more than thirty years, and hardly any offenders were awaiting execution on death row. The ferocious-seeming federal statutes were almost entirely for show.

The way in which the wars on drugs and crime were fought cannot be understood without taking into account the incessant pressure that elected officeholders felt they were under from the electorate. As one former congressman puts

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it, "Voters were afraid of criminals, and politicians were afraid of voters." This fear reached panic proportions in election years. Seven of the years from 1981 to 1994 were election years nationwide; seven were not. During those fourteen years Congress passed no fewer than seven major crime bills. Of those seven, six were passed in election years (usually late in the year). That is, there was only one election year in which a major crime bill was *not* passed, and only one non-election year in which a major crime bill was passed.

Another effect of the extreme vulnerability of American politicians is that it is even harder for them than for democratically elected politicians in other countries to take tough decisions: to court unpopularity, to ask for sacrifices, to impose losses, to fly in the face of conventional wisdom—in short, to act in what they believe to be their constituents' interest and the national interest rather than in their own interest. Timothy J. Penny, a Democrat who left the House of Representatives in 1994, put the point starkly, perhaps even too harshly, in *Common Cents* (1995).

Voters routinely punish lawmakers who try to do unpopular things, who challenge them to face unpleasant truths about the budget, crime, Social Security, or tax policy. Similarly, voters reward politicians for giving them what they want—more spending for popular programs—even if it means wounding the nation in the long run by creating more debt.

America's enduring budget deficit offers a vivid, almost textbook illustration. For nearly a generation—ever since the early 1980s—American politicians have bemoaned the deficit and exhorted themselves to do something about it. However, they have never done nearly enough, even in their own eyes. Why? Part of the answer undoubtedly lies in genuine ideological differences that make it hard for conservatives and liberals to compromise; but much of the answer also lies in the brute fact that every year in the United States is either an election year or a pre-election year, with primaries and threatened primaries intensifying politicians' electoral concerns. In 1985 Senator Warren Rudman, of New Hampshire, reckoned that he and other senators who had voted for a bold deficit-reduction package had flown a "kamikaze mission." One of his colleagues said they had "jumped off a cliff." Twelve years later, not surprisingly, the federal budget remains in deficit.

MORE DEMOCRACY, MORE DISSATISFACTION

NUMEROUS opinion polls show that millions of Americans are profoundly dissatisfied with the functioning of their political system. Consequently, there is a widespread disposition in the United States—at all levels of society, from the grass roots to the editorial conference and the company boardroom—to want to make

American democracy "work better," and concrete proposals abound for achieving this goal.

The proposed reforms can be grouped loosely under four headings. First come those that if implemented would amount to the creation of electronic town meetings, taking advantage of technological developments such as CD-ROM, interactive cable systems, electronic mail, and the Internet. *The Wall Street Journal* referred in this general connection to "arranging a marriage of de Tocqueville and technology."

Second, and related, are proposals for promoting democratic deliberation and citizen participation. The Kettering Foundation and the Public Agenda Foundation already organize National Issues Forums that embrace some 3,000 educational and civic groups across America. David Mathews, the president of the Kettering Foundation, considers these modern forums to be directly linked to America's ancient "town meeting tradition." Benjamin R. Barber, a political philosopher at Rutgers University, would go further and create a nationwide network of neighborhood assemblies that could take actual decisions on strictly local matters and also debate and lobby on broader national questions. James S. Fishkin, a political scientist at the University of Texas, likewise seeks to leap the modern barriers to face-to-face democracy by means of what he calls "deliberative opinion polls" (which have been tried, with considerable success, in England).

The third group of proposed reforms is equally radical but more old-fashioned. This group seeks to complete the work of Progressive Era reformers by extending to the federal level the characteristic state-level reforms that were introduced in that period: the referendum, the initiative, and the recall. The political analyst Kevin Phillips, for example, suggests that "the United States should propose and ratify an amendment to the Constitution setting up a mechanism for holding nationwide referendums to permit the citizenry to supplant Congress and the president in making certain categories of national decisions." He would also like to see congressmen and senators be subject to popular recall once they have been in office for a year. Certainly proposals of this kind have broad public support. Depending on the precise wording of the question, more than 50 percent of Americans support the idea of national referenda and more than 80 percent support both the initiative and the recall.

Finally, many commentators—and the majority of the American public—strongly back the newest and most fashionable item on the "making democracy work better" agenda: the imposition of term limits on both state and federal

elected officials, notably members of Congress. But the great majority of those who favor term limits, true to the American democratic tradition, are less concerned with good government and the public interest as such than with the present generation of politicians' alleged lack of responsiveness to the mass of ordinary people. At the center of this argument is the idea that the United States is now governed by an unresponsive, self-perpetuating, and increasingly remote class of professional politicians, a class that ought to be replaced as soon as possible by "citizen legislators"—men and women who will serve the people simply because they *are* the people. As one advocate of term limits puts it, ordinary people—the proposed citizen legislators of the future—"know things about life in America that people who have lived as very self-important figures in Washington for thirty years have no way of knowing or have forgotten."

Some of the items on this four-part shopping list of reforms are intrinsically attractive, or at least a good case can be made for them. Nevertheless, taken as a whole, the mainstream reformist agenda, with its traditional American emphasis on agency democracy and its view of politicians as mere servants of the people's will, rests on extremely tenuous conceptual foundations and, more important, is almost

certainly inappropriate as a response to the practical needs of turn-of-the-century America. America's problem of governance is not insufficient responsiveness on the part of its elected leaders. On the contrary, America's problem is their hyper-responsiveness. Politicians do not need to be tied down still further, to be subjected to even more external pressures than they are already. Rather, they need to be given just a little more political leeway, just a little more room for policy maneuver. Reforms should seek to strengthen division-of-labor democracy, not to create a still purer form of American-style agency democracy.

THE USUAL SUSPECTS

IF the reformist prescriptions are bad ones, there may be something wrong with the reformist diagnoses on which they are based. What *are* the principal sources of dissatisfaction with the current state of American democracy?

Many commentators have gotten into the habit of blaming Americans' dissatisfaction, in an almost knee-jerk fashion, on "the Vietnam War and Watergate." It is certainly the case that evidence of widespread dissatisfaction began to appear during and



shortly after Vietnam and Watergate. *Post hoc, ergo propter hoc?* Maybe. But in the first place, Vietnam and Watergate led to a flowering of idealism as well as cynicism (and to the election, in 1974, of the “Watergate babies,” one of the most idealistic and public-spirited cohorts ever to be elected to Congress). And in the second place, it seems strange to attribute the dissatisfactions of the 1990s to events that took place in the 1960s and early 1970s. That distance in time is roughly that between the two world wars; most of today’s college students were not yet born when President Richard Nixon resigned. To be sure, subsequent scandals have undoubtedly (and deservedly) damaged the reputations of the White House and Congress, but at least some of the sleaze of recent years has come about because politicians need such enormous sums to finance their re-election campaigns.

Two other hypotheses can be dismissed, or at least assigned little importance. One is that politicians today are a poor lot compared with the intellectual and moral giants of the past. It probably is the case that having to run

downs of parts of the government as Presidents and Congress have failed to agree on timely taxing and spending measures. Other things being equal, divided government is probably to be regretted.

All the same, it is hard to credit the idea that Americans’ disillusionment with their politics would be significantly less today if party control had been mainly undivided over the past thirty years. On the one hand, recent periods in which the government has not been divided (the Carter years, 1977–1980, and the first two Clinton years, 1993–1994) were not notably successful (Carter never surmounted the energy crisis, and Clinton failed to reform America’s health-care system even though that reform had figured prominently in his campaign promises). On the other hand, as David R. Mayhew, a political scientist at Yale University, has shown, periods of divided government have often been extremely productive in legislative terms. On balance, divided government appears to be more of a nuisance and a distraction than a root cause of either the government’s difficulties or the public’s disillusionment.

The idea that the system suffers from the excessive power of interest groups, however, needs to be taken seriously. Jonathan Rauch, in his recent book *Demosclerosis*, argues persuasively that America’s interest groups have become larger, more numerous, and more powerful over the past three decades, to the point that they now have the capacity to prevent the government from doing almost anything that would disadvantage or offend any of the clients they represent—taking in, as it happens, virtually the whole American population.

Rauch is probably right; but one needs to go on to ask, as he himself does, what the power of these pullulating and all-encompassing lobby groups is based on. The answer is straightforward: their power depends ultimately on their money, on their capacity to make trouble for elected officials, on the votes of their members (the AARP has more than 30 million members), and on elective politicians’ fear of not being re-elected. The groups’ power, in other words, depends on politicians’ electoral vulnerability; and America’s interest groups are peculiarly powerful in large measure because America’s elective politicians are peculiarly vulnerable. It is not quite as simple as that—but almost.

It is also important to note the precise timing of the developments described by Rauch and by almost everyone else who has written on this subject. Nearly all these developments date, almost uncannily, from the past thirty years: the rise in the number of interest groups, the growth in their membership and power, the decline in the public’s trust in government officials, and the increased sense among voters that who they are and what they think do not matter to

scared all the time has tended to drive some able people out of politics and to discourage others from coming in. But the phenomenon is a relatively recent one, and for the time being there is no reason to think that the average congressman or senator is in any way inferior to his or her predecessors. The quality of America’s existing political class is at most a small part of the problem.

The same is almost certainly true of the idea that divided government—in which one party controls one or both houses of Congress while the other controls the presidency—is to be preferred. Divided government has characterized America for most of the past thirty years, and it has been associated with some of the more spectacular political and policy failures of that period—the Iran-contra scandal of the 1980s (which arose out of a Republican Administration’s desire to circumvent a Democratic Congress), and successive shut-

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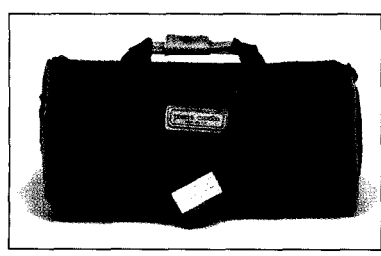
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politicians and officials in Washington.

In other words, the origins of the present era of democratic discontent can be traced to the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s. It was then that people began to think something was wrong not with this or that aspect of the system but with the system itself.

What happened at that time? It is hard to escape the conclusion that the crucial developments, largely provoked by the Vietnam War and Watergate, were the attempts from 1968 onward to open up the American system, to make it more transparent, to make it more accessible, to make it, in a word, more "democratic." These attempts led to an increase in the number of primary elections, to a further weakening of America's already weak political parties, to increases in the already high costs of electoral politics, and to the increasing isolation, in an increasingly hostile environment, of elective officials. In short, the post-Vietnam, post-Watergate reforms led, as they were meant to lead, to increased vulnerability to their electorates on the part of individual American officeholders.

The paradox that has resulted is obvious and easily stated. Recent history suggests that when large numbers of Americans become dissatisfied with the workings of their government, they call for more democracy. The more they call for more democracy, the more of it they get. The more of it they get,

the more dissatisfied they become with the workings of their government. The more they become dissatisfied with the workings of their government, the more they call for more democracy. The cycle endlessly repeats itself.

WHAT, IF ANYTHING, MIGHT BE DONE?

PRECISELY because American politicians are so exposed electorally, they probably have to display—and do display—more political courage more often than the politicians of any other democratic country. The number of political saints and martyrs in the United States is unusually large.

There is, however, no special virtue in a political system that requires large numbers of politicians to run the risk of martyrdom in order to ensure that tough decisions can be taken in a timely manner in the national interest. The number of such decisions that need to be taken is always likely to be large; human nature being what it is, the supply of would-be martyrs is always likely to be small. On balance it would seem better not to try to eliminate the electoral risks (it can never be done in a democracy) but to reduce somewhat their scale and intensity. There is no reason why the risks run by

American politicians should be so much greater than the risks run by elective politicians in other democratic countries.

How, then, might the risks be reduced? What can be done?

A number of reforms to the existing system suggest themselves. It may be that none of them is politically feasible—Americans hold tight to the idea of agency democracy—but in principle there should be no bar to any of them. One of the simplest would also be the most radical: to lengthen the terms of members of the House of Representatives from two years to four. The proposal is by no means a new one: at least 123 resolutions bearing on the subject were introduced in Congress in the eighty years from 1885 to 1965, and President Lyndon B. Johnson advocated the change in his State of the Union address in January of 1966.

A congressman participating in a Brookings Institution round table held at about the time of Johnson's message supported the change, saying, "I think that the four years would help you to be a braver congressman, and I think what you need is bravery. I think you need courage." Another congressman on the same occasion cited the example of another bill that he believed had the support of a majority in the House. "That bill is not going to come up this year. You know why it is not coming up? . . . Because four hundred and thirty-five of us have to face election. . . . If we had a four-year term, I am as confident as I can be the bill would have come to the floor and passed."

A similar case could be made for extending the term of senators to eight years, with half the Senate retiring or running for re-election every four years. If the terms of members of both houses were thus extended and made to coincide, the effect in reducing America's never-ending election campaign would be dramatic.

There is much to be said, too, for all the reasons mentioned so far, for scaling down the number of primary elections. They absorb extravagant amounts of time, energy, and money; they serve little democratic purpose; few people bother to vote in them; and they place additional and unnecessary pressure on incumbent officeholders. Since the main disadvantage of primaries is the adverse effect they have on incumbents, any reforms probably ought to be concerned with protecting incumbents' interests.

At the moment, the primary laws make no distinction between situations in which a seat in the House or the Senate is already occupied and situations in which the incumbent is, for whatever reason, standing down. The current laws provide for a primary to be held in either case. An incumbent is therefore treated as though the seat in question were open and he or she were merely one of the candidates for it. A relatively simple reform would be to distinguish between the two situations. If a seat was open, primaries would be held in both

parties, as now; but if the incumbent announced that he or she intended to run for re-election, then a primary in his or her party would be held only if large numbers of party supporters were determined to have one—that is, were determined that the incumbent should be ousted. The obvious way to ascertain whether such determination existed would be by means of a petition supervised by the relevant state government and requiring a considerable number of signatures. The possibility of a primary would thus be left open, but those who wanted one would have to show that they were both numerous and serious. A primary would not be held simply because an ambitious, possibly demented, possibly wealthy individual decided to throw his or her hat into the ring.

Any steps to strengthen the parties as institutions would be desirable on the same grounds. Lack of party cover in the United States means that elective officeholders find it hard to take tough decisions partly because they lack safety in numbers. They can seldom, if ever, say to an aggrieved constituent or a political-action committee out for revenge, "I had to vote that way because my party told me to," or even "I had to vote that way because we in my party all agreed that we would." Lack of party cohesion, together with American voters' disposition to vote for the individual rather than the party, means that congressmen and senators are always in danger of being picked off one by one.

BALLOT FATIGUE

WHAT might be done to give both parties more backbone? Clearly, the parties would be strengthened—and elective officeholders would not need to raise so much money for their own campaigns—if each party organization became a major source of campaign funding. In the unlikely event (against the background of chronic budget deficits) that Congress ever gets around to authorizing the federal funding of congressional election campaigns, a strong case could be made for channeling as much of the money as possible through the parties, and setting aside some of it to cover their administrative and other ongoing costs.

The party organizations and the nexus between parties and their candidates would also be strengthened if it were made easier for ordinary citizens to give money to the parties and for the parties to give money to their candidates. Until 1986, when the program was abolished, tax credits were available for taxpayers who contributed small sums to the political parties. These credits could be restored. Larry J. Sabato, a political scientist at the University of Virginia, has similarly suggested that citizens entitled to a tax refund could be allowed to divert a small part of their refund to the party of their choice. Such measures would not, however, reduce candidates' dependence on donations from wealthy individuals and PACs unless they were accompanied by measures enabling the parties to contribute more generously to their candidates' campaigns.

At the moment there are strict legal limits on the amount of money that national or state party organizations can contribute to the campaigns of individual candidates. The limits should be raised (and indexed to inflation). There is even a case for abolishing them altogether.

All that said, there is an even more straightforward way of reducing incumbents' dependence on campaign contributors. At present incumbents have to spend so much time raising funds because the campaigns themselves are so expensive. They could be made cheaper. This, of course, would be one of the effects of making U.S. elections less numerous and less frequent than they are now. Another way to lower the cost of elections would be to provide candidates and parties with free air time on television and radio.

THE CASE FOR SWANS

CLEARLY, the idea of term limits also needs to be taken seriously. After all, if American politicians are excessively vulnerable at the moment, one way of rendering them invulnerable would be to prevent them from running for re-election—no impending election contest, no need to worry overmuch about the voters.

As is evident, much of the actual campaigning in favor of term limits takes the form of ranting—against big government, against Washington, against “them,” against taxes, against the deficit. Much of the rhetoric of term-limiters is sulfurous, and their principal motive often seems to be revenge. They claim that members of Congress are insufficiently responsive to their constituents, when the evidence suggests that, on the contrary, they are far too responsive. The term-limits movement is of a piece with previous outbursts of frustrated American populism, including the Know-Nothing movement of the 1850s—an essay, as one historian has put it, in “the politics of impatience.”

Nevertheless, there is an alternate case for term limits, based not on American politicians' alleged lack of responsiveness to the voters but on their alleged overresponsiveness to the voters and interest groups in order to secure their own re-election. The most persuasive and subtle advocate of this line of argument is the political commentator George F. Will. His goal, Will says partway through his book *Restoration* (1992), “is deliberative democracy through representatives who function at a constitutional distance from the people.” He reiterates the point about distance in his final paragraphs: “Americans must be less demanding of government. They must give to government more constitutional space in which to think, more social distance to facilitate deliberation about the future.”

The case for giving American politicians more space and distance is undoubtedly a strong one, but assuming these objectives are desirable, it is still not clear that term limits are a suitable means for achieving them. Three questions arise. Would term limits achieve the desired objectives? Would

they do so at an acceptable cost in terms of other American goals and values? Might the desired objectives not be better achieved by other means? The first question is strictly empirical. The other two mix the empirical and the moral.

One way in which term limits might promote deliberation is by causing some incumbent legislators—namely those serving out their final term under term limits—to think, speak, and vote differently from the way they would have thought, spoken, and voted if they had been eligible and running for re-election. In addition, for term limits to affect the behavior not just of certain individuals but of Congress as a whole, it would be necessary for any given Congress to contain a significant number of these final-term members. In other words, congressional lame ducks would have to quack differently from other ducks, and there would have to be a fair number of them on the pond.

It is impossible to be sure, but it seems unlikely that term limits would have significant effects along these lines. In the first place, existing research (along with most human experience) suggests that a final-term congressman or senator, after eleven or twelve years on Capitol Hill, would be unlikely to alter his pattern of behavior in any radical way. He might send out fewer pieces of franked mail and make fewer trips back home, but he would probably not execute many U-turns in the way he spoke and voted. In the second place, although the proportion of senators who would be in their final term under term limits would normally be large (possibly half if senators were restricted to two terms), the proportion of lame-duck congressmen would normally be much smaller (an average of sixty to seventy out of 435 if House members were limited to six terms). The cumulative impact of the lame ducks would thus be much greater in the Senate than in the House, and in both houses it would probably be felt mainly at the margins (though of course the margins can, on occasion, be important).

But those who advocate term limits in fact build very little of their case on the expected future behavior of lame ducks. Rather, they are seeking to create a wholly new class of elected representatives. George Will holds out the prospect that mandatory term limits would have the effect of replacing today's political careerists with noncareerists—in other words, of replacing today's ducks with creatures more closely resembling swans. The new legislators, because they were not careerists, would not be driven by the need to secure re-election, and for that reason they would be more likely to concern themselves with the national interest. Also because they were not political careerists, they would be more likely to have some personal, hands-on understanding of America and its real concerns.

The prospect is undoubtedly attractive. But is it realistic? Would term limits in fact diminish the number of careerists and produce legislators who were more national-minded and disinterested?

The most important difficulties with Will's hypothesis are

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twofold. One is that modern politics at all levels, local and state as well as national, is an immensely time-consuming, energy-consuming activity that demands enormous commitment from those who are attracted to it. Legislative sessions are long, constituents' demands are exigent, policy problems are increasingly complicated. As a result, politics all over the world, not just in the United States, is becoming professionalized. Men and women in all countries increasingly choose a political career at an early age and then stick with it. It seems likely that even under term limits the great majority of congressmen and senators would be drawn from this professional political class, which has not only the commitment to politics but also the requisite patience, skills, and contacts. To be sure, people's political careers would take a different shape; but they would still be political careers.

The other difficulty is the reverse of the first. Just as politics is becoming more professionalized, so is almost every other occupation. As many women in particular know

alter the way they behave in the context of the country's existing institutions. They can try to find alternative ways of insulating at least some aspects of policymaking from the intense campaigning and electioneering pressures they are now under.

Short of taking difficult issues out of electoral politics altogether, there are tactics that could be employed. Most of them are out of keeping with the contemporary American preferences for direct democracy, high levels of political participation, and the maximum exposure of all political processes to the public gaze; but that is precisely their strength. Bismarck is reputed to have said that there are two things one should never watch being made: sausages and laws. Both should be judged more by the end result than by the precise circumstances of their manufacture.

One available tactic might be called "the collusion of the elites." There may be occasions on which the great majority of America's politicians, in both the executive and legislative branches, are able to agree that an issue is of such overriding importance to the nation that it must be dealt with at almost any cost; that the politicians involved must therefore be prepared to set aside their ideological and other differences in the interests of finding a workable solution; and that having found a solution, they must stick together in presenting it to what may well be a disgruntled or even hostile electorate. In order to be successful, the collusion-

of-elites tactic requires not only a substantial degree of bipartisanship (or, better still, nonpartisanship) but also unusually small teams of negotiators, complete secrecy (not a single ray of "sunshine" must penetrate the proceedings), and the presentation to Congress and the public of a comprehensive, all-or-nothing, take-it-or-leave-it proposal.

The number of occasions on which politicians will be prepared to set aside their ideological differences and pool their political risks in this fashion will inevitably be small. There were no signs that such a spirit might prevail when President Clinton and the Republican majorities in Congress wrangled over how to cut the budget deficit last winter. But there have been instances of the successful collusion of elites, even in relatively recent times.

One of them occurred in 1983, when representatives of President Reagan and the two party leaderships on Capitol Hill colluded to save the Social Security system, which at that time was in imminent danger of bankruptcy. Paul Light's classic account of the 1983 Social Security reform, *Artful Work* (1985), is in effect a case study of how to conduct collusion-of-elites politics and of the circumstances in which it may succeed. The so-called Gang of Seventeen that was originally put together to hammer out a deal (and was

to their cost, it is becoming harder and harder to take career breaks—those who jump off the ladder in any profession find it increasingly hard to jump back even to the level they were on when they left, let alone the level they would have attained had they stayed. For this reason it is hard to imagine that many upwardly mobile corporate executives or successful professionals or small-business owners would take time off to serve in Congress on a citizen-legislator basis. The citizens who sought to serve on this basis would probably be largely the rich and the old.

VOTER-PROOFING

DESPITE their differences, term limits and the proposals offered here have in common the fact that they seek major changes in America's political institutions—in some cases involving an amendment to the Constitution. But of course America's politicians are free to

later reduced to a Gang of Nine) excluded all the more-extreme ideologues and met in circumstances of great secrecy, even using, according to one participant, “unmarked limos.”

Of the Gang of Seventeen’s activities, Light writes,

The meetings seemed to inaugurate a new form of presidential-congressional government. The meetings were secret. There were no minutes or transcripts. All conversations were strictly off the record. The gang was free to discuss all of the options without fear of political retaliation. It . . . [existed] completely outside of the constitutional system.

Ultimately, as Light relates, the “secret gang built a compromise, wrapped it in a bipartisan flag, and rammed it through Congress. There was no other way to move. It was government by *fait accompli*.” It was also successful government—and none of the participants suffered electoral damage.

Another possible tactic, with many similarities to the collusion of elites, might be called “putting it into commission.” If taking tough decisions is too risky politically, then get someone else to take them. If someone else cannot be found to take them, then make someone else *appear* to take them. The someone else need not be but usually will be a bipartisan or nonpartisan commission of some kind.

Such a commission, the National Commission on Social Security Reform, played a role in the passage of the 1983 act, but an even better example was the procedure adopted by Congress in 1990 for closing redundant military bases. Earlier practice had been almost a caricature of Congress’s traditional decision-making process. The Secretary of Defense would propose a program of base closures. Senators and congressmen would immediately leap to the defense of targeted bases in their home states or districts. They of course had the support of their colleagues, who were threatened with or feared base closures in *their* home states or districts. Almost never did anyone manage to close any bases.

Realizing that the process was absurd and that huge sums of taxpayers’ money were being wasted in keeping redundant bases open, Congress decided to protect itself from itself. It established the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission, which employed an extraordinarily simple formula. The Defense Secretary every two years published a list of the bases he proposed to close, together with a statement of criteria he had used in compiling his list. The commission then examined the list in light of the criteria, held public hearings, and recommended a modified list (with additions as well as deletions) to the President. The President was obliged to accept the commission’s list as a whole or reject it as a whole. If, as invariably happened, he accepted it, Congress could intervene only if within forty-five legislative days it passed a bill overriding the President’s decision and rejecting the whole list. This it never did.

The formula was a near miracle of voter-proofing. Members of Congress were left free to protest the closure of bases in their home districts or states, but the decision was ultimately taken by the President, who could nonetheless ascribe all blame to the commission, and all Congress had to do for the President’s decision to take effect was to do nothing. In the event, hundreds of bases were closed and millions of dollars saved, but no member of Congress ever had to vote—and be seen by his constituents to be voting—in favor of closing a base near home. Beyond any question the results were in America’s national interest.

It is not wholly fantastic to suppose that the President in odd-numbered years might, on the basis of advice received from a bipartisan commission, announce a list of “program eliminations,” which Congress could countermand only by voting to reject the list as a whole. Presidents would probably prefer to put forward such lists at the beginning of their first term in office—or at any time during their second term—when they, at least, were not up for re-election.

A final tactic, which could also be adopted without major institutional change, might be described as “thinking big.” Proposals that are put forward on a piecemeal basis can also be opposed, and in all probability defeated, on a piecemeal basis. In contrast, large-scale, broad-based proposals may have a better chance of success simply by virtue of their comprehensiveness. They can provide something for everyone—conservatives as well as liberals, deficit cutters as well as program defenders, residents of the Sun Belt as well as of the Rust Belt. Gains as well as losses can be broadcast widely. The 1983 Social Security reform and the 1986 tax reform were certainly “big thoughts” of this general type. So, in its way, was the recent base-closure program.

Tactics like these—the collusion of elites, putting issues into commission, and thinking big—all have their virtues, but they also suffer from being tactics in the pejorative as well as the descriptive sense. At bottom they are somewhat cynical devices for getting around the real difficulty, which is the hyper-responsiveness of American politicians that is induced by their having to run scared so much of the time. Although it would be harder, it would be better over the long term to confront this problem directly and try to bring about at least some of the fundamental institutional changes proposed here. The American people cannot govern themselves. They therefore need to find appropriate means of choosing representatives who can do a decent job of governing on their behalf, and that means giving the people’s representatives space, time, and freedom in which to take decisions, knowing that if they get them wrong, they will be punished by the voters. In twentieth-century America the airy myths of agency democracy are precisely that: myths. What America needs today, though it does not seem to know it, is a more realistic and down-to-earth form of division-of-labor democracy. ☞

Cosmopolitan

by AKHIL SHARMA

LITTLE after ten in the morning Mrs. Shaw walked across Gopal Maurya's lawn to his house. It was Saturday, and Gopal was asleep on the couch. The house was dark. When he first heard the doorbell, the ringing became part of a dream. Only he had been in the house during the four months since his wife had followed his daughter out of his life, and the sound of the bell joined somehow with his dream to make him feel ridiculous. Mrs. Shaw rang the bell again. Gopal woke confused and anxious, the state he was in most mornings. He was wearing only underwear and socks, but his blanket was cold from sweat.

He stood up and hurried to the door. He looked through the peephole. The sky was bright and clear. Mrs. Shaw was standing sideways about a foot from the door, and appeared to be staring out over his lawn at her house. She was short and red-haired and wore a pink sweatshirt and gray jogging pants.

"Hold on! Hold on, Mrs. Shaw!" he shouted, and ran back into the living room to search for a pair of pants and a shirt. The light was dim, and he had difficulty finding them. As he groped under and behind the couch and looked among the clothes crumpled on the floor, he worried that Mrs. Shaw would not wait and was already walking down the steps. He wondered if he had time to turn on the light to make his search easier. This was typical of the details that could baffle him in the morning.

Mrs. Shaw and Gopal had been neighbors for about two years, but Gopal had met her only three or four times in passing. From his wife he had learned that Mrs. Shaw was a guidance counselor at the high school his daughter had attended. He also learned that she had been divorced for a decade. Her husband, a successful orthodontist, had left her. Since then

Mrs. Shaw had moved five or six times, though rarely more than a few miles from where she had last lived. She had bought the small mustard-colored house next to Gopal's as part of this restlessness. Although he did not dislike Mrs. Shaw, Gopal was irritated by the peeling paint on her house and the weeds sprouting out of her broken asphalt driveway, as if by association his house were becoming shabbier. The various cars that left her house late at night made him see her as dissolute. But all this Gopal was willing to forget that morning, in exchange for even a minor friendship.

Gopal found the pants and shirt and tugged them on as he returned to open the door. The light and cold air swept in, reminding him of what he must look like. Gopal was a small man, with delicate high cheekbones and long eyelashes. He had always been proud of his looks and had dressed well.

Now he feared that the gray stubble and long hair made him appear bereft.

"Hello, Mr. Maurya," Mrs. Shaw said, looking at him and through him into the darkened house and then again at him. The

sun shone behind her. The sky was blue dissolving into white. "How are you?" she asked gently.

"Oh, Mrs. Shaw," Gopal said, his voice pitted and rough, "some bad things have happened to me." He had not meant to speak so directly. He stepped out of the doorway.

The front door opened into a vestibule, and one had a clear view from there of the living room and the couch where Gopal slept. He switched on the lights. To the right was the kitchen. The round Formica table and the counters were dusty. Mrs. Shaw appeared startled by this detail. After a moment she said, "I heard." She paused and then quickly added, "I am sorry, Mr. Maurya. It must be hard. You must not feel

The magazine article mentioned
that when leaving after making love for
the first time, one should
always arrange the next meeting.
Gopal phoned Mrs. Shaw

ashamed; it's no fault of yours."

"Please, sit," Gopal said, motioning to a chair next to the kitchen table. He wanted to tangle her in conversation and keep her there for hours. He wanted to tell her how the loneliness had made him fantasize about calling an ambulance so that he could be touched and prodded, or how for a while he had begun loitering at the Indian grocery store like the old men who have not learned English. What a pretty, good woman, he thought.

Mrs. Shaw stood in the center of the room and looked around her. She was slightly overweight, and her nostrils appeared to be perfect circles, but her small white Reebok sneakers made Gopal see her as fleet with youth and innocence. "I've been thinking of coming over. I'm sorry I didn't."

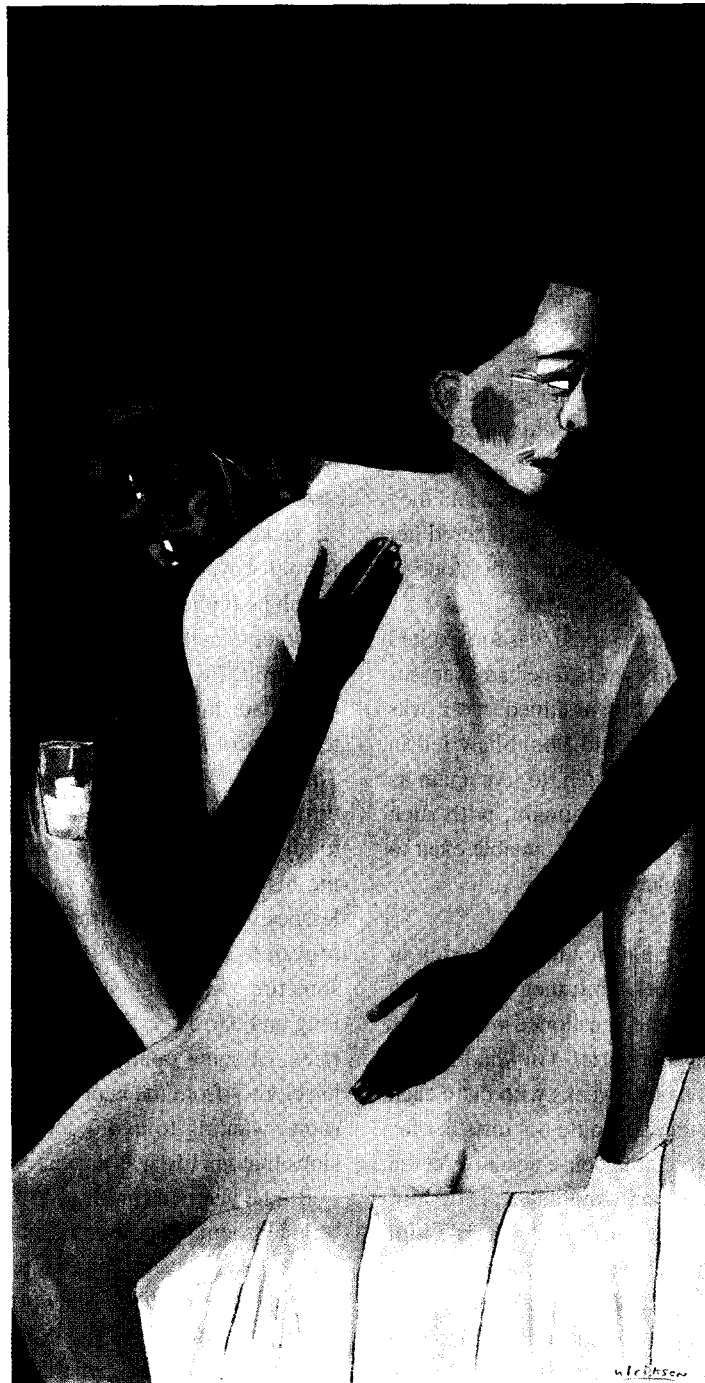
"That's fine, Mrs. Shaw," Gopal said, standing near the phone on the kitchen wall. "What could anyone do? I am glad, though, that you are visiting."

He searched for something else to say. To extend their time together, Gopal walked to the refrigerator and asked her if she wanted anything to drink.

"No, thank you," she said.

"Orange juice, apple juice, or grape, pineapple, guava. I also have some tropical punch," he continued, opening the refrigerator door wide, as if to show he was not lying.

"That's all right," Mrs. Shaw said, and they both became quiet. The sunlight pressed through windows that were laminated with dirt. "You must remember, everybody plays a part in these things, not just the one who is left," she said, and then they were silent again. "Do you need anything?"



"No. Thank you."

They stared at each other. "Did you come for something?" Gopal asked, although he did not want to imply that he was trying to end the conversation.

"I wanted to borrow your lawn mower."

"Already?" April was just starting, and the dew did not evaporate until midday.

"Spring fever," she said.

Gopal's mind refused to provide a response to this. "Let me get you the mower."

They went to the garage. The warm sun on the back of his neck made Gopal hopeful. He believed that something would soon be said or done to delay Mrs. Shaw's departure, for certainly God could not leave him alone again. The garage smelled of must and gasoline. The lawn mower was in a shadowy corner with an aluminum ladder resting on it. "I haven't used it in a while," Gopal said, placing the ladder on the ground and smiling at Mrs. Shaw beside

him. "But it should be fine." As he stood up, he suddenly felt aroused by Mrs. Shaw's large breasts, boy's haircut, and little-girl sneakers. Even her nostrils suggested a frank sexuality. Gopal wanted to put his hands on her waist and pull her toward him. And then he realized that he had.

"No. No," Mrs. Shaw said, laughing and putting her palms flat against his chest. "Not now." She pushed him away gently.

Gopal did not try kissing her again, but he was excited. *Not now*, he thought. He carefully poured gasoline into the lawn mower, wanting to appear calm, as if the two of them had already made some commitment and there was no need for ner-

vousness. He pushed the lawn mower out onto the gravel driveway and jerked the cord to test the engine. *Not now, not now*, he thought, each time he tugged. He let the engine run for a minute. Mrs. Shaw stood silent beside him. Gopal felt like smiling, but wanted to make everything appear casual. "You can have it for as long as you need," he said.

"Thank you," Mrs. Shaw replied, and smiled. They looked at each other for a moment without saying anything. Then she rolled the lawn mower down the driveway and onto the road. She stopped, turned to look at him, and said, "I'll call."

"Good," Gopal answered, and watched her push the lawn mower down the road and up her driveway into the tin shack that huddled at its end. The driveway was separated from her ranch-style house by ten or fifteen feet of grass, and they were connected by a trampled path. Before she entered her house, Mrs. Shaw turned and looked at him as he stood at the top of his driveway. She smiled and waved.

When he went back into his house, Gopal was too excited to sleep. Before Mrs. Shaw, the only woman he had ever embraced was his wife, and a part of him assumed that it was now only a matter of time before he and Mrs. Shaw fell in love and his life resumed its normalcy. Oh, to live again as he had for nearly thirty years! Gopal thought, with such force that he shocked himself. Unable to sit, unable even to think coherently, he walked around his house.

HIS daughter's departure had made Gopal sick at heart for two or three weeks, but then she sank so completely from his thoughts that he questioned whether his pain had been hurt pride rather than grief. Gitu had been a graduate student and spent only a few weeks with them each year, so it was understandable that he would not miss her for long. But the swiftness with which the dense absence on the other side of his bed unknotted and evaporated made him wonder whether he had ever loved his wife. It made him think that his wife's abrupt decision never to return from her visit to India was as much his fault as God's. Anita, he thought, must have decided upon seeing Gitu leave that there was no more reason to stay, and that perhaps, after all, it was not too late to start again. Anita had gone to India at the end of November—a month after Gitu got on a Lufthansa flight to go live with her boyfriend in Germany—and a week later, over an echoing phone line, she told him of the guru and her enlightenment.

Perhaps if Gopal had not retired early from AT&T, he could have worked long hours and his wife's and daughter's slipping from his thoughts might have been mistaken for healing. But he had nothing to do. Most of his acquaintances had come by way of his wife, and when she left, Gopal did not call them, both because they had always been more Anita's friends than his and because he felt ashamed, as if his wife's departure revealed his inability to love her. At one

point, around Christmas, he went to a dinner party, but he did not enjoy it. He found that he was not curious about other people's lives and did not want to talk about his own.

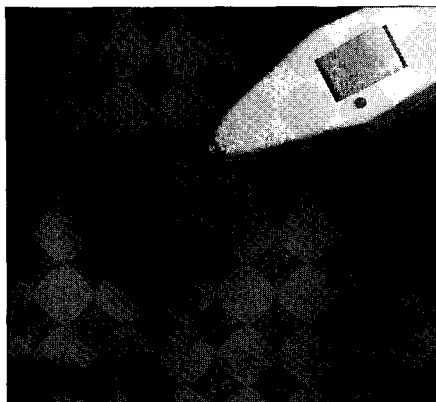
A month after Anita's departure a letter from her arrived—a blue aerogram, telling of the ashram, and of sweeping the courtyard, and of the daily prayers. Gopal responded immediately, but she never wrote again. His pride prevented him from trying to continue the correspondence, though he read her one letter so many times that he inadvertently memorized the Pune address. His brothers sent a flurry of long missives from India, on paper so thin that it was almost translucent, but his contact with them over the decades had been minimal, and the tragedy pushed them apart instead of pulling them closer.

Gitu sent a picture of herself wearing a yellow-and-blue ski jacket in the Swiss Alps. Gopal wrote her back in a stiff, formal way, and she responded with a breezy postcard to which he replied only after a long wait.

Other than this, Gopal had had little personal contact with the world. He was accustomed to getting up early and going to bed late, but now, since he had no work and no friends, after he spent the morning reading *The New York Times* and *The Home News & Tribune* front to back, Gopal felt adrift through the afternoon and evening. For a few weeks he tried to fill his days by showering and shaving twice daily, brushing his teeth after every snack and meal. But the purposelessness of this made him despair, and he stopped bathing altogether and instead began sleeping more and more, sometimes sixteen hours a day. He slept in the living room, long and narrow with high rectangular windows blocked by trees. At some point, in a burst of self-hate, Gopal moved his clothes from the bedroom closet to a corner of the living room, wanting to avoid comforting himself with any illusions that his life was normal.

But he yearned for his old life, the life of a clean kitchen, of a bedroom, of going out into the sun, and on a half-conscious level that morning Gopal decided to use the excitement of clasping Mrs. Shaw to change himself back to the man he had been. She might be spending time at his house, he thought, so he mopped the kitchen floor, moved back into his bedroom, vacuumed and dusted all the rooms. He spent most of the afternoon doing this, aware always of his humming lawn mower in the background. He had only to focus on it to make his heart race. Every now and then he would stop working and go to his bedroom window, where, from behind the curtains, he would stare at Mrs. Shaw. She had a red bandanna tied around her forehead, and he somehow found this appealing. That night he made himself an elaborate dinner with three dishes and a mango shake. For the first time in months Gopal watched the eleven o'clock news. He had the lights off and his feet up on a low table. Lebanon was being bombed again, and Gopal kept bursting into giggles for no reason. He tried to think of what he would do to-

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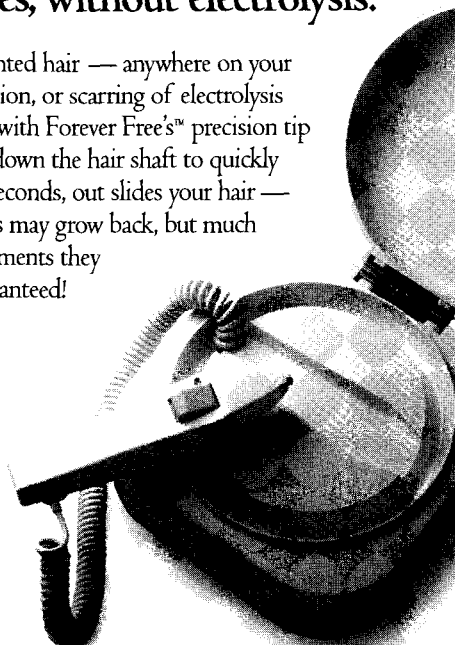


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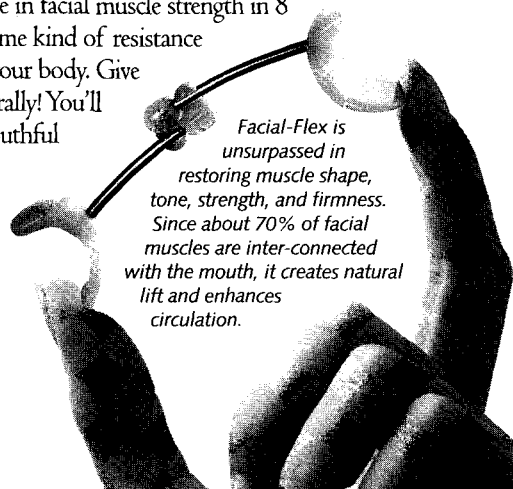
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morrow. Gopal knew that he was happy and that to avoid depression he must keep himself busy until Mrs. Shaw called. He suddenly realized that he did not know Mrs. Shaw's first name. He padded into the darkened kitchen and looked at the phone diary. "Helen Shaw" was written in the big, loopy handwriting of his wife. Having his wife help him in this way did not bother him at all, and then he felt ashamed that it didn't.

HE next day was Sunday, and Gopal anticipated it cheerfully, for the *Sunday Times* was frequently so thick that he could spend the whole day reading it. But this time he did not read it all the way through. He left the book review and the other features sections to fill time over the next few days. After eating a large breakfast—the idea of preparing elaborate meals had begun to appeal to him—he went for a haircut. Gopal had not left his house in several days. He rolled down the window of his blue Honda Civic and took the long way, past the lake, to the mall. Instead of going to his usual barber, he went to a hair stylist, where a woman with long nails and large, contented breasts shampooed his hair before cutting it. Then Gopal wandered around the mall, savoring its buttered-popcorn smell and enjoying the sight of the girls with their sometimes odd-colored hair. He went into some of the small shops and looked at clothes, and considered buying a half pound of cocoa amaretto coffee beans, although he had never cared much for coffee. After walking for nearly two hours, Gopal sat on a bench and ate an ice cream cone while reading an article in *Cosmopolitan* about what makes a good lover. He had seen the magazine in CVS and, noting the article mentioned on the cover, had been reminded how easily one can learn anything in America. Because Mrs. Shaw was an American, Gopal thought, he needed to do research into what might be expected of him. Although the article was about what makes a woman a good lover, it offered clues for men as well. Gopal felt confident that given time, Mrs. Shaw would love him. The article made attachment appear effortless. All you had to do was listen closely and speak honestly.

He returned home around five, and Mrs. Shaw called soon after. "If you want, you can come over now."

"All right," Gopal answered. He was calm. He showered and put on a blue cotton shirt and khaki slacks. When he stepped outside, the sky was turning pink and the air smelled of wet earth. He felt young, as if he had just arrived in America and the huge scale of things had made him a giant as well.

But when he rang Mrs. Shaw's doorbell, Gopal became nervous. He turned around and looked at the white clouds against the enormous sky. He heard footsteps and then the door swishing open and Mrs. Shaw's voice. "You look handsome," she said. Gopal faced her, smiling and uncomfortable. She wore a different sweatshirt, but still had on yesterday's jogging pants. She was barefoot. A yellow light shone behind her.

"Thank you," Gopal said, and then nervously added "Helen," to confirm their new relationship. "You look nice too." She did look pretty to him. Mrs. Shaw stepped aside to let him in. They were in a large room. In the center were two pale couches forming an L, with a television in front of them. Off to the side was a kitchenette—a stove, a refrigerator, and some cabinets over a sink and counter.

Seeing Gopal looking around, Mrs. Shaw said, "There are two bedrooms in the back, and a bathroom. Would you like anything to drink? I have juice, if you want." She walked to the kitchen.

"What are you going to have?" Gopal asked, following her. "If you have something, I'll have something." Then he felt embarrassed. Mrs. Shaw had not dressed up; obviously, "Not now" had been a polite rebuff.

"I was going to have a gin and tonic," she said, opening the refrigerator and standing before it with one hand on her hip.

"I would like that too." Gopal came close to her and with a dart kissed her on the lips. She did not resist, but neither did she respond. Her lips were chapped. Gopal pulled away and let her make the drinks. He had hoped the kiss would tell him something of what to expect.

They sat side by side on a couch and sipped their drinks. A table lamp cast a diffused light over them.

"Thank you for letting me borrow the lawn mower."

"It's nothing." There was a long pause. Gopal could not think of anything to say. *Cosmopolitan* had suggested trying to learn as much as possible about your lover, so he asked, "What's your favorite color?"

"Why?"

"I want to know everything about you."

"That's sweet," Mrs. Shaw said, and patted his hand. Gopal felt embarrassed and looked down. He did not know whether he should have spoken so frankly, but part of his intention had been to flatter her with his interest. "I don't have one," she said. She kept her hand on his.

Gopal suddenly thought that they might make love tonight, and he felt his heart kick. "Tell me all about yourself," he said with a voice full of feeling. "Where were you born?"

"I was born in Jersey City on May fifth, but I won't tell you the year." Gopal tried to grin gamely and memorize the date. A part of him was disturbed that she did not feel comfortable enough with him to reveal her age.

"Did you grow up there?" he asked, taking a sip of the gin and tonic. Gopal drank slowly, because he knew that he could not hold his alcohol. He saw that Mrs. Shaw's toes were painted bright red. Anita had never used nail polish, and Gopal wondered what a woman who would paint her toenails might do.

"I moved to Newark when I was three. My parents ran a newspaper-and-candy shop. We sold greeting cards, stamps." Mrs. Shaw had nearly finished her drink. "They opened at eight in the morning and closed at seven-thirty at

night. Six days a week." When she paused between swallows, she rested the glass on her knee.

Gopal had never known anyone who worked in such a shop, and he became genuinely interested in what she was saying. He remembered his lack of interest at the Christmas party and wondered whether it was the possibility of sex that made him fascinated with Mrs. Shaw's story. "Were you a happy child?" he asked, grinning broadly and then bringing the grin to a quick end, because he did not want to appear ironic. The half glass that Gopal had drunk had already begun to make him feel light-headed and gay.

"Oh, pretty happy," she said, "although I liked to think of myself as serious. I would look at the evening sky and think that no one else had felt what I was feeling." Mrs. Shaw's understanding of her own feelings disconcerted Gopal and made him momentarily think that he wasn't learning anything important, or that she was in some way independent of her past and thus incapable of the sentimental attachments through which he expected her love for him to grow.

Cosmopolitan had recommended that both partners reveal themselves, so Gopal decided to tell a story about himself. He did not believe that being honest about himself would actually change him. Rather, he thought the deliberateness of telling the story would rob it of the power to make him vulnerable. He started to say something, but the words twisted in his mouth, and he said, "You know, I don't really drink much." Gopal felt embarrassed by the non sequitur. He thought he sounded foolish, though he had hoped that the story he would tell would make him appear sensitive.

"I kind of guessed that from the juices," she said, smiling. Gopal laughed.

He tried to say what he had wanted to confess earlier. "I associate drinking with being American, and I haven't been able to truly Americanize. On my daughter's nineteenth birthday we took her to dinner and a movie, but we didn't talk much, and the dinner finished earlier than we had expected it would. The restaurant was in a mall, and we had nothing to do until the movie started, so we wandered around Foodtown." Gopal thought he sounded pathetic, so he tried to shift the story. "After all my years in America, I am still astonished by those huge grocery stores and enjoy walking in them. But my daughter is an American, so our wandering around in Foodtown must have been very strange for her. She doesn't know Hindi, and her parents must seem very strange." Gopal noticed that his heart was racing. He wondered if he was sadder than he knew.

"That's sweet," Mrs. Shaw said. The brevity of her response made Gopal nervous.

Mrs. Shaw kissed his cheek. Her lips were dry, Gopal noticed. He turned slightly so that their lips could touch. They kissed again. Mrs. Shaw opened her lips and closed her eyes. They kissed for a long time. When they pulled apart, they continued their conversation calmly, as if they were accus-

tomed to each other. "I didn't go into a big grocery store until I was in college," she said. "We always went to the small shops around us. When I first saw those long aisles, I wondered what happens to the food if no one buys it. I was living then with a man who was seven or eight years older than I, and when I told him, he laughed at me, and I felt so young." She stopped and then added, "I ended up leaving him because he always made me feel young." Her face was only an inch or two from Gopal's. "Now I'd marry someone who could make me feel that way." Gopal felt his romantic feelings drain away at the idea of how many men she had slept with. But the fact that Mrs. Shaw and he had experienced something removed some of the loneliness he was feeling, and Mrs. Shaw had large breasts. They began kissing again. Soon they were tussling and groping on the floor.

Her bed was large and low to the ground. Behind it was a window, and although the shade was drawn, the lights of passing cars cast patterns on the opposing wall. Gopal lay next to Mrs. Shaw and watched the shadows change. He felt his head and found that his hair was standing up on either side like horns. The shock of seeing a new naked body, so different in its amplitude from his wife's, had been exciting. A part of him was giddy with this, as if he had checked his bank balance and discovered that he had thousands more than he expected. "You are very beautiful," he said, for *Cosmopolitan* had advised saying this after making love. Mrs. Shaw rolled over and kissed his shoulder.

"No, I'm not. I'm kind of fat, and my nose is strange. But thank you," she said. Gopal looked at her and saw that even when her mouth was slack, the lines around it were deep. "You look like you've been rolled around in a dryer," she said, and laughed. Her laughter was sudden and confident. He had not noticed it before, and it made him laugh as well.

They became silent and lay quietly for several minutes, and when Gopal began feeling self-conscious, he said, "Describe the first house you lived in."

Mrs. Shaw sat up. Her stomach bulged, and her breasts drooped. She saw him looking and pulled her knees to her chest. "You're very thoughtful," she said.

Gopal felt flattered. "Oh, it's not thoughtfulness."

"I guess if it weren't for your accent, the questions would sound artificial," she said. Gopal felt his stomach clench. "I lived in a block of small houses that the Army built for returning GIs. They were all drab, and the lawns ran into each other. They were near Newark airport. I liked to sit at my window and watch the planes land. That was when Newark was a local airport."

"Your house was two stories?"

"Yes. And my room was on the second floor. Tell me about yourself."

"I am the third of five brothers. We grew up in a small, poor village. I got my first pair of shoes when I left high school." As Gopal was telling her the story, he remembered

how he used to make Gitu feel lazy with stories of his childhood, and his voice fell. "Everybody was like us, so I never thought of myself as poor."

They talked this way for half an hour, with Gopal asking most of the questions and trying to discover where Mrs. Shaw was vulnerable and how this vulnerability made him attractive to her. Although she answered his questions candidly, Gopal could not find the unhappy childhood or the trauma of an abandoned wife that might explain the urgency of this moment in bed. "I was planning to leave my husband," she explained casually. "He was crazy. Almost literally. He thought he was going to be a captain of industry or a senator. He wasn't registered to vote. He knew nothing about business. Once, he invested almost everything we had in a hydroponic farm in Southampton. With him I was always scared of being poor. He used to spend two hundred dollars a week on lottery tickets, and he would save the old tickets in shoe boxes in the garage." Gopal did not personally know any Indian who was divorced, and he had never been intimate enough with an American to learn what a divorce was like, but he had expected something more painful—tears and recriminations. The details she gave made the story sound practiced, and he began to think that he would never have a hold over Mrs. Shaw.

Around eight Mrs. Shaw said, "I am going to do my bills tonight." Gopal had been wondering whether she wanted him to have dinner with her and spend the night. He would have liked to, but he did not protest.

As she closed the door behind him, Mrs. Shaw said, "The lawn mower's in the back. If you want it." Night had come, and the stars were out. As Gopal pushed the lawn mower down the road, he wished that he loved Mrs. Shaw and that she loved him.

He had left the kitchen light on by mistake, and its glow was comforting. "Come, come, cheer up," he said aloud, pacing in the kitchen. "You have a lover." He tried to smile and grimaced instead. "You can make love as often as you want. Be happy." He started preparing dinner. He fried okra and steam-cooked lentils. He made both rice and bread.

As he ate, Gopal watched a television movie about a woman who had been in a coma for twenty years and suddenly woke up one day; adding to her confusion, she was pregnant. After washing the dishes he finished the article in *Cosmopolitan* that he had begun reading in the mall. The article was the second of two parts, and it mentioned that when leaving after making love for the first time, one should always arrange the next meeting. Gopal had not done this, and he phoned Mrs. Shaw.

He used the phone in the kitchen, and as he waited for her to pick up, he wondered whether he should introduce himself or assume that she would recognize his voice. "Hi, Helen," he blurted out as soon as she said "Hello." "I was just thinking of you and thought I'd call." He felt more nervous now than he had while he was with her.

"That's sweet," she said, with what Gopal thought was tenderness. "How are you?"

"I just had dinner. Did you eat?" He imagined her sitting on the floor between the couches with a pile of receipts before her. She would have a small pencil in her hand.

"I'm not hungry. I normally make myself an omelet for dinner, but I didn't want to tonight. I'm having another drink." Then, self-conscious, she added, "Otherwise I grind my teeth. I started after my divorce and I didn't have health insurance or enough money to go to a dentist." Gopal wanted to ask if she still ground her teeth, but he did not want to imply anything.

"Would you like to have dinner tomorrow? I'll cook." They agreed to meet at six. The conversation continued for a few minutes longer, and when Gopal hung up, he was pleased at how well he had handled things.

While lying in bed, waiting for sleep, Gopal read another article in *Cosmopolitan*, about job pressure's effects on one's sex life. He had enjoyed both articles and was happy with himself for his efforts at understanding Mrs. Shaw. He fell asleep smiling.

HE next day, after reading the papers, Gopal went to the library to read the first part of the *Cosmopolitan* article. He ended up reading articles from *Elle*, *Redbook*, *Glamour*, *Mademoiselle*, and *Family Circle*, and one from *Reader's Digest*—"How to Tell If Your Marriage Is on the Rocks." He tried to memorize jokes from the "Laughter Is the Best Medicine" section, so that he would never be at a loss for conversation.

Gopal arrived at home by four and began cooking. Dinner was pleasant, though they ate in the kitchen, which was lit with buzzing fluorescent tubes. Gopal worried that yesterday's lovemaking might have been a fluke. Soon after they finished the meal, however, they were on the couch, struggling with each other's clothing.

Gopal wanted Mrs. Shaw to spend the night, but she refused, saying that she had not slept a full night with anyone since her divorce. At first Gopal was touched by this. They lay on his bed in the dark. The alarm clock on the lampstand said 9:12 in big red figures. "Why?" Gopal asked, rolling over and resting his cheek on her cool shoulder. He wanted to reassure her that he was eager to listen.

"I think I'm a serial monogamist and I don't want to make things too complicated." She twisted a lock of his hair around her middle finger. "It isn't because of you, sweetie. It's with every man."

"Oh," Gopal said, hurt by the idea of other men and disillusioned about her motives. He continued believing, however, that now that they were lovers, the power of his concern would make her love him back. One of the articles he had read that day had suggested that people become dependent in spite of themselves when they are constantly cared for. So he made himself relax and act understanding.

Natural Control



Newborns begin life totally dependent on others for their care and nurturing. As children mature, it is with some difficulty that caring, nurturing parents try to transfer some of that infant dependence from them onto their offspring.

Later upon reaching puberty, the children who are half-child, half-adult become aware of the many ways they can assert their independence of the persons who brought them into this life. At that point, the struggle between the parents and children escalates. Struggle for what? The upper hand! Control!

While it is a widespread assumption that control is vested in certain human beings who act as though they had control, the notion is a myth.

Does any person, no matter the age, sex or status, get the upper hand over gravity, momentum, friction or any of the laws of physics? Who could even try? The control of those natural laws simply exists, has existed and presumably will continue to exist.

In the 1920s, the late Richard W. Wetherill, author and management consultant, began describing a natural law of human behavior. He learned of it through transcendental insights and by observation of people's behavior. The law states: **Right action gets right results, whereas wrong action gets wrong results.** Wetherill called it the law of absolute right.

Right is, of course, absolute, but people tend to argue over its definition, saying that what is right for a headhunter is not right for a Philadelphia lawyer. The truth is that people need to reason from nature's definition.

Nature defines absolutely right action as *simultaneously* logical, expedient, and moral; it is action that works, is appropriate and honest. Right action is taken at the right time, in the right way, at the right place and for the right reason. If any of those elements is missing, the behavioral law reveals its total control.

Nature says that there is only one right reason to do anything: to obey nature's laws—all of them. The action people should take is dictated by the needs of each situation of life. The law of behavior ensures that they get right results when their action is logical, appropriate and moral, no matter which of the natural laws is involved. Do people obey the dictates of gravity, momentum and centrifugal force? You bet they do! People learn to obey nature's laws of physics or suffer wrong results.

The same obedience is required with regard to nature's behavioral law: Do what is right and enjoy right results; fail to do what is right and suffer from wrong results.

Unlike the laws of physics, the behavioral law appears to allow a time lapse between the wrong action and wrong result. Because usually there are no immediate, visible wrong results, people think they are getting away with their wrong behavior. They do not want to know that their wrong action taken as a teenager is the cause of unwanted, unhealthy results forty or fifty years later.

For example, the teenage drinkers or smokers or drug users do not anticipate liver and kidney failure nor lung cancer and heart disease nor AIDS and fried brains. If their drinking, smoking or drug use continues, that is what they get. If people want relief from such wrong results, it is necessary to change the thinking that originally justified their wrong action. Blaming their genes or childhood abuse or being in the wrong place at the wrong time simply ensures a recurring performance.

In addition to those long-term wrong results there are also immediate wrong results that are invisible to people until they receive a correct explanation. Wetherill was able to explain to his trainees that their immediate wrong results occur within the brain.

First, consider right thoughts. They are processed in the brain along neural paths, and after the action has been completed, those neural connec-

tions release. According to brain researchers, the ongoing dance of neurotransmitters and receptors is the code that brain cells use to communicate in the body's mainframe computer. For instance, you might feel an itch on your arm and scratch it. The thought suggesting the scratch is satisfied when the action is executed, and it releases.

By contrast, wrong thoughts are apart from reality and, therefore, cannot be carried out. Because the action is not satisfied, the neural path is not completed, and the wrong thoughts get stuck.

Each impacted wrong thought becomes a premise influencing every subsequent conclusion that touches on the particular topic. For instance, a critical judgment of someone is a personal opinion (apart from reality) that cannot be satisfied and, therefore, remains as a subconscious thought. How often do you hear people judge one another to be skunks, jackasses or bitches? Obviously such judgments are apart from reality. Once formed, however, the judgmental thought is reflected in decisions about that person, thereafter, and acts as a barrier in the relationship.

That sequence of thought patterns explains the cause and effect of people's repetitive emotional reactions, bad habits and compulsive behavior.

The way people get released from those wrong results was developed by Wetherill while he was still in his teens. During his first year at Antioch College when he tried to explain the theory to his professor, his remarks were met with patronizing amusement that was quite disheartening.

For more than twenty-five years, Wetherill attempted unsuccessfully to find a receptive audience for his discovery of the law of behavior. Finally his extraordinary abilities and warm personality attracted several people with whom he could work. He began teaching them how to release their wrong thinking and unblock their minds.

Wetherill's method for releasing people's thoughts from their subconscious database is called the command phrase technique. He labeled people's fixed mental circuits as distortions of logic. They become the wrong premises that distort conclusions and lead to wrong results of some sort.

The precise wording of a distortion of logic Wetherill called a command phrase. Every command phrase has two parts: the command itself and the circumstance, stated or implied, under which the command will be obeyed.

For example, "When I get old enough, I'll eat whatever I want." The command is to eat whatever he/she wants, and the circumstance is when the person is old enough. What child in a highchair has not had such thoughts?

Wetherill taught that command phrases can be regarded as judgments people form about whatever happens and whoever is involved. Since infants arrive with an empty, conscious database and no experience to guide their thoughts, the habit of judging starts at the time of an infant's first breath. Scriptural writings from thousands of years ago make the observation that "they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies." A lie is any thought that is apart from reality—not necessarily wicked or sinful, but scientifically wrong.

Learn more about how people trap themselves with wrong thoughts by ordering Wetherill's books about the Right-Action Ethic™ as a lifestyle and nature's law of behavior. Call toll free 1 800 992-9124 weekdays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Eastern Time. Request free book fliers and/or charge books to Visa® or MasterCard™ or send payment to The Alpha Publishing House, 1101 Enterprise Drive, P O Box 255, Royersford, PA 19468-0255.

This text was prepared by E. Marie Bothe, president of The Alpha Publishing House and of Wetherill Associates, Inc. (WAI), warehouse distributors to the auto-electric aftermarket with annual sales of \$150 million—a business where the Right-Action Ethic is applied.

Gopal went to bed an hour after Mrs. Shaw left. Before going to sleep he called her and wished her good night. He began calling her frequently after that, two or three times a day. Over the next few weeks Gopal found himself becoming coy and playful with her. When Mrs. Shaw picked up the phone, he made panting noises, and she laughed at him. She liked his being childlike with her. Sometimes she would point to a spot on his chest, and he would look down, even though he knew nothing was there, so that she could tap his nose. When they made love, she was thoughtful about asking what pleased him, and Gopal learned from this and began asking her the same. They saw each other nearly every day, though sometimes only briefly, for a few minutes in the evening or at night. But Gopal continued to feel nervous around her, as if he were somehow imposing. If she phoned him and invited him over, he was always flattered. As Gopal learned more about Mrs. Shaw, he began thinking she was very smart. She read constantly, primarily history and economics. He was always surprised, therefore, when she became moody and sentimental and talked about how loneliness is incurable. Gopal liked Mrs. Shaw in this mood, because it made him feel needed, but he felt ashamed that he was so insecure. When she did not laugh at a joke, Gopal doubted that she would ever love him. When they were in bed together and he thought she might be looking at him, he kept his stomach sucked in.

 HIS sense of precariousness made Gopal try developing other supports for himself. One morning early in his involvement with Mrs. Shaw he phoned an Indian engineer with whom he had worked on a project about corrosion of copper wires and who had also taken early retirement from AT&T. They had met briefly several times since then and had agreed each time to get together again, but neither had made the effort. Gopal waited until eleven before calling, because he felt that any earlier would make him sound needy. A woman picked up the phone. She told him to wait a minute as she called for Rishi. Gopal felt vaguely deceitful, as if he were trying to pass himself off as just like everyone else, although his wife and child had left him.

"I haven't been doing much," he confessed immediately to Rishi. "I read a lot." When Rishi asked what, Gopal answered "Magazines," with embarrassment. They were silent then. Gopal did not want to ask Rishi immediately if he would like to meet for dinner, so he hunted desperately for a conversational opening. He was sitting in the kitchen. He looked at the sunlight on the newspaper before him and remembered that he could ask Rishi questions. "How are you doing?"

"It isn't like India," Rishi responded, complaining. "In India the older you are, the closer you are to the center of attention. Here you have to keep going. Your children are away and you have nothing to do. I would go back, but

Ratha doesn't want to. America is much better for women."

Gopal felt a rush of relief that Rishi had spoken so much. "Are you just at home or are you doing something part time?"

"I am the president of the Indian Cultural Association," Rishi said boastfully.

"That's wonderful," Gopal said, and with a leap added, "I want to get involved in that more, now that I have time."

"We always need help. We are going to have a fair," Rishi said. "It's on the twenty-fourth, next month. We need help coordinating things, arranging food, putting up flyers."

"I can help," Gopal said. They decided that he should come to Rishi's house on Wednesday, two days later.

Gopal was about to hang up when Rishi added, "I heard about your family." Gopal felt as if he had been caught in a lie. "I am sorry," Rishi said.

Gopal was quiet for a moment and then said, "Thank you." He did not know whether he should pretend to be sad. "It takes some getting used to," he said, "but you can go on from nearly anything."

Gopal went to see Rishi that Wednesday, and on Sunday he attended a board meeting to plan for the fair. He told jokes about a nearsighted snake and a water hose, and about a golf instructor and God. One of the men he met there invited him to dinner.

Mrs. Shaw, however, continued to dominate his thoughts. The more they made love, the more absorbed Gopal became in the texture of her nipples in his mouth and the heft of her hips in his hands. He thought of this in the shower, while driving, while stirring his cereal. Two or three times over the next month Gopal picked her up during her lunch hour and they hurried home to make love. They would make love and then talk. Mrs. Shaw had once worked at a dry cleaner, and Gopal found this fascinating. He had met only one person in his life before Mrs. Shaw who had worked in a dry-cleaning business, and that was different, because it was in India, where dry cleaning still had the glamour of advancing technology. Being the lover of someone who had worked in a dry-cleaning business made Gopal feel strange. It made him think that the world was huge beyond comprehension, and to spend his time trying to control his own small world was inefficient. Gopal began thinking that he loved Mrs. Shaw. He started listening to the golden-oldies station in the car, so that he could hear what she had heard in her youth.

Mrs. Shaw would ask about his life, and Gopal tried to tell her everything she wanted to know in as much detail as possible. Once, he told her of how he had begun worrying when his daughter was finishing high school that she was going to slip from his life. To show that he loved her, he had arbitrarily forbidden her to ski, claiming that skiing was dangerous. He had hoped that she would find this quaintly immigrant, but she was just angry. At first the words twisted in his mouth, and he spoke to Mrs. Shaw about skiing in gen-

eral. Only with an effort could he tell her about his fight with Gitu. Mrs. Shaw did not say anything at first. Then she said, "It's all right if you were that way once, as long as you aren't that way now." Listening to her, Gopal suddenly felt angry.

"Why do you talk like this?" he asked.

"What?"

"When you talk about how your breasts fall or how your behind is too wide, I always say that's not true. I always see you with eyes that make you beautiful."

"Because I want the truth," she said, also angry.

Gopal became quiet. Her desire for honesty appeared to refute all his delicate and constant manipulations. Was he actually in love with her, he wondered, or was this love just a way to avoid loneliness? And did it matter that so much of what he did was conscious?

He questioned his love more and more as the day of the Indian festival approached and Gopal realized that he was delaying asking Mrs. Shaw to come with him. She knew about the fair but had not mentioned her feelings. Gopal told himself that she would feel uncomfortable among so many Indians, but he knew that he hadn't asked her because bringing her would make him feel awkward. For some reason he was nervous that word of Mrs. Shaw might get to his wife and daughter. He was also anxious about what the Indians with whom he had recently become friendly would think. He had met mixed couples at Indian parties before, and they were always treated with the deference usually reserved for cripples. If Mrs. Shaw had been of any sort of marginalized ethnic group—a first-generation immigrant, for instance—then things might have been easier.

The festival was held in the Edison First Aid Squad's square blue-and-white building. A children's dance troupe performed in red dresses so stiff with gold thread that the girls appeared to hobble as they moved about the center of the concrete floor. A balding comedian in oxblood shoes and a white suit performed. Light folding tables along one wall were precariously laden with large pots, pans, and trays of food. Gopal stood in a corner with several men who had retired from AT&T and, slightly drunk, improvised on jokes he had read in *1,001 Polish Jokes*. The Poles became Sikhs, but he kept most of the rest. He was laughing and feeling proud that he could so easily become the center of attention, but he felt lonely at the thought that when the food was served, the men at his side would drift away to join their families and he would stand alone in line. After listening to talk of someone's marriage, he began thinking about Mrs. Shaw. The men were clustered together, and the women conversed separately. They will go home and make love and not talk, Gopal thought. Then he felt sad and frightened. To make amends for his guilt at not bringing Mrs. Shaw along, he told a bearded man with yellow teeth, "These Sikhs aren't so bad. They are the smartest ones in India, and no one can match a Sikh for courage." Then Gopal felt dazed and ready to leave.

HEN Gopal pulled into his driveway, it was late afternoon. His head felt oddly still, as it always did when alcohol started wearing off, but Gopal knew that he was drunk enough to do something foolish. He parked and walked down the road to Mrs. Shaw's. He wondered if she would be in. Pale tulips bloomed in a thin, uneven row in front of her house. The sight of them made him hopeful.

Mrs. Shaw opened the door before he could knock. For a moment Gopal did not say anything. She was wearing a denim skirt and a sleeveless white shirt. She smiled at him. Gopal spoke solemnly and from far off. "I love you," he said to her for the first time. "I am sorry I didn't invite you to the fair." He waited a moment for his statement to sink in and for her to respond with a similar endearment. When she did not, he repeated, "I love you."

Then she said, "Thank you," and told him not to worry about the fair. She invited him in. Gopal was confused and flustered by her reticence. He began feeling awkward about his confession. They kissed briefly, and then Gopal went home.

The next night, as they sat together watching TV in his living room, Mrs. Shaw suddenly turned to Gopal and said, "You really do love me, don't you?" Although Gopal had expected the question, he was momentarily disconcerted by it, because it made him wonder what love was and whether he was capable of it. But he did not think that this was the time to quibble over semantics. After being silent long enough to suggest that he was struggling with his vulnerability, Gopal said yes and waited for Mrs. Shaw's response. Again she did not confess her love. She kissed his forehead tenderly. This show of sentiment made Gopal angry, but he said nothing. He was glad, though, when Mrs. Shaw left that night.

The next day Gopal waited for Mrs. Shaw to return home from work. He had decided that the time had come for the next step in their relationship. As soon as he saw her struggle through her doorway, hugging sacks of groceries, Gopal phoned. He stood on the steps to his house, with the extension cord trailing over one shoulder, and looked at her house and at her rusted and exhausted-looking station wagon, which he had begun to associate strongly and warmly with the broad sweep of Mrs. Shaw's life. Gopal nearly said, "I missed you" when she picked up the phone, but he became embarrassed and asked, "How was your day?"

"Fine," she said, and Gopal imagined her moving about the kitchen, putting away whatever she had bought, placing the tea kettle on the stove, and sorting her mail on the kitchen table. This image of domesticity and independence moved him deeply. "There's a guidance counselor who is dying of cancer," she said, "and his friends are having a party for him, and they put up a sign saying 'RSVP with your money now! Henry can't wait for the party!'" Gopal and Mrs. Shaw laughed.

"Let's do something," he said.

"What?"

Gopal had not thought this part out. He wanted to do something romantic that would last until bedtime, so that he could pressure her to spend the night. "Would you like to have dinner?"

"Sure," she said. Gopal was pleased. He had gone to a liquor store a few days earlier and bought wine, just in case he had an opportunity to get Mrs. Shaw drunk and get her to fall asleep beside him.

Gopal plied Mrs. Shaw with wine as they ate the linguine he had cooked. They sat in the kitchen, but he had turned off the fluorescent lights and lit a candle. By the third glass Gopal was feeling very brave; he placed his hand on her inner thigh.

"My mother and father," Mrs. Shaw said halfway through the meal, pointing at him with her fork and speaking with the deliberateness of the drunk, "convinced me that people are not meant to live together for long periods of time." She was speaking in response to Gopal's hint earlier that only over time and through living together could people get to know each other properly. "If you know someone that well, you are bound to be disappointed."

"Maybe that's because you haven't met the right person," Gopal answered, feeling awkward for saying something that could be considered arrogant when he was trying to appear vulnerable.

"I don't think there is a right person. Not for me. To fall in love I think you need a certain suspension of disbelief, which I don't think I am capable of."

Gopal wondered whether Mrs. Shaw believed what she



was saying or was trying not to hurt his feelings by revealing that she couldn't love him. He stopped eating.

Mrs. Shaw stared at him. She put her fork down and said, "I love you. I love how you care for me and how gentle you are."

Gopal smiled. Perhaps, he thought, the first part of her statement had been a preface to a confession that he mattered so much that she was willing to make an exception for him. "I love you too," Gopal said. "I love how funny and smart and honest you are. You are very beautiful." He leaned over slightly to suggest that he wanted to kiss her, but Mrs. Shaw did not respond.

Her face was stiff. "I love you," she said again, and Gopal became nervous. "But I am not *in* love with you." She stopped and stared at Gopal.

Gopal felt confused. "What's the difference?"

"When you are *in* love, you never think about yourself, because you love the other person

so completely. I've lived too long to think anyone is that perfect." Gopal still didn't understand the distinction, but he was too embarrassed to ask more. It was only fair, a part of him thought, that God would punish him this way for driving away his wife and child. How could anyone love him?

Mrs. Shaw took his hands in hers. "I think we should take a little break from each other, so we don't get confused. Being with you, I'm getting confused too. We should see other people."

"Oh." Gopal's chest hurt despite his understanding of the justice of what was happening.

"I don't want to hide anything. I love you. I truly love you. You are the kindest lover I've ever had."

"Oh."

For a week after this Gopal observed that Mrs. Shaw did not bring another man to her house. He went to the Sunday board meeting of the cultural association, where he regaled the members with jokes from *Reader's Digest*. He taught his first Hindi class to children at the temple. He took his car to be serviced. Gopal did all these things. He ate. He slept. He even made love to Mrs. Shaw once, and until she asked him to leave, he thought everything was all right again.

Then, one night, Gopal was awakened at a little after three by a car pulling out of Mrs. Shaw's driveway. It is just a friend, he thought, standing by his bedroom window and watching the Toyota move down the road. Gopal tried falling asleep again, but he could not, though he was not thinking of anything in particular. His mind was blank, but sleep did not come.

I will not call her, Gopal thought in the morning. And as he was dialing her, he thought he would hang up before all the numbers had been pressed. He heard the receiver being lifted on the other side and Mrs. Shaw saying "Hello." He did not say anything. "Don't do this, Gopal," she said softly. "Don't hurt me."

"Hi," Gopal whispered, wanting very much to hurt her. He leaned his head against the kitchen wall. His face twitched as he whispered, "I'm sorry."

"Don't be that way. I love you. I didn't want to hurt you. That's why I told you."

"I know."

"All right?"

"Yes." They were silent for a long time. Then Gopal hung up. He wondered if she would call back. He waited, and when she didn't, he began jumping up and down in place.

 OR the next few weeks Gopal tried to spend as little time as possible in his house. He read the morning papers in the library, and then had lunch at a diner, and then went back to the library. On Sundays he spent all day at the mall. His anger at Mrs. Shaw soon disappeared, because he thought that the blame for her leaving lay with him. Gopal continued, however, to avoid home, because he did not want to experience the jealousy that would keep him awake all night. Only if he arrived late enough and tired enough could he fall asleep. In the evening Gopal either went to the temple and helped at the seven o'clock service or visited one of his new acquaintances. But over the weeks he exhausted the kindheartedness of his acquaintances and had a disagreement with one man's wife, and he was forced to return home.

The first few evenings he spent at home Gopal thought he would have to flee his house in despair. He slept awkwardly, waking at the barest rustle outside his window, thinking that a car was pulling out of Mrs. Shaw's driveway. The days

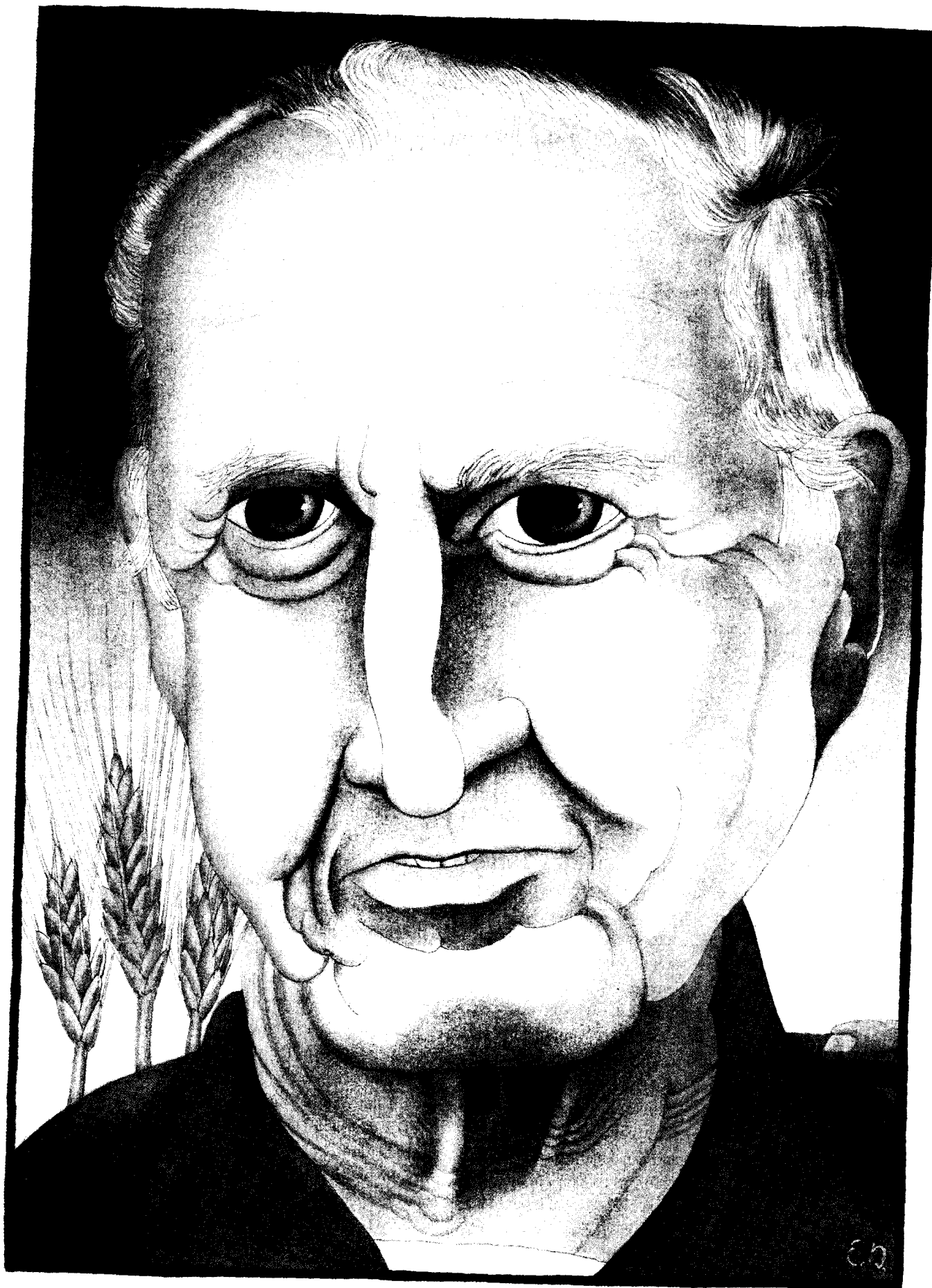
were easier than the nights, especially when Mrs. Shaw was away at work. Gopal would sleep a few hours at night and then nap during the day, but this left him exhausted and dizzy. In the afternoon he liked to sit on the steps and read the paper, pausing occasionally to look at her house. He liked the sun sliding up its walls. Sometimes he was sitting outside when she drove home from work. Mrs. Shaw waved to him once or twice, but he did not respond, not because he was angry but because he felt himself become so still at the sight of her that he could neither wave nor smile.

A month and a half after they separated, Gopal still could not sleep at night if he thought there were two cars in Mrs. Shaw's driveway. Once, after a series of sleepless nights, he was up until three watching a dark shape behind Mrs. Shaw's station wagon. He waited by his bedroom window, paralyzed with fear and hope, for a car to pass in front of her house and strike the shape with its headlights. After a long time in which no car went by, Gopal decided to check for himself.

He started across his lawn crouched over and running. The air was warm and smelled of jasmine, and Gopal was so tired that he thought he might spill to the ground. After a few steps he stopped and straightened up. The sky was clear, and there were so many stars that Gopal felt as if he were in his village in India. The houses along the street were dark and drawn in on themselves. Even in India, he thought, late at night the houses look like sleeping faces. He remembered how surprised he had been by the pitched roofs of American houses when he had first come here, and how this had made him yearn to return to India, where he could sleep on the roof. He started across the lawn again. Gopal walked slowly, and he felt as if he were crossing a great distance.

The station wagon stood battered and alone, smelling faintly of gasoline and the day's heat. Gopal leaned against its hood. The station wagon was so old that the odometer had gone all the way around. Like me, he thought, and like Helen, too. This is who we are, he thought—dusty, corroded, and dented from our voyages, with our unflagging hearts rattling on inside. We are made who we are by the dust and corrosion and dents and unflagging hearts. Why should we need anything else to fall in love? he wondered. We learn and change and get better. He leaned against the car for a minute or two. Fireflies swung flickering in the breeze. Then he walked home.

Gopal woke early and showered and shaved and made breakfast. He brushed his teeth after eating and felt his cheeks to see whether he should shave again, this time against the grain. At nine he crossed his lawn and rang Mrs. Shaw's doorbell. He had to ring it several times before he heard her footsteps. When she opened the door and saw him, Mrs. Shaw drew back as if she were afraid. Gopal felt sad that she could think he might hurt her. "May I come in?" he asked. She stared at him. He saw mascara stains beneath her eyes and silver strands mingled with her red hair. He thought he had never seen a woman as beautiful or as gallant. ☞



Forgotten Benefactor of Humanity

by GREGG EASTERBROOK

*Norman Borlaug,
the agronomist whose discoveries
sparked the Green Revolution, has saved literally
millions of lives, yet he is hardly
a household name*

AMERICA has three living winners of the Nobel Peace Prize, two universally renowned and the other so little celebrated that not one person in a hundred would be likely to pick his face out of a police lineup, or even recognize his name. The universally known recipients are Elie Wiesel, who for leading an exemplary life has been justly rewarded with honor and acclaim, and Henry Kissinger, who in the aftermath of his Nobel has realized wealth and prestige. America's third peace-prize winner, in contrast, has been the subject of little public notice, and has passed up every opportunity to parley his award into riches or personal distinction. And the third winner's accomplishments, unlike Kissinger's, are morally unambiguous. Though barely known in the country of his birth, elsewhere in the world Norman Borlaug is widely considered to be among the leading Americans of our age.

Borlaug is an eighty-two-year-old plant breeder who for most of the past five decades has lived in developing nations, teaching the techniques of high-yield agriculture. He received the Nobel in 1970, primarily for his work in reversing the food shortages that haunted India and Pakistan in the 1960s. Perhaps more than anyone else, Borlaug is responsible for the fact that throughout the postwar era, except in sub-Saharan Africa, global food production has expanded faster than the human population, averting the mass starvations that were widely predicted—for example, in the 1967 best seller *Famine—1975!* The form of agriculture

that Borlaug preaches may have prevented a billion deaths.

Yet although he has led one of the century's most accomplished lives, and done so in a meritorious cause, Borlaug has never received much public recognition in the United States, where it is often said that the young lack heroes to look up to. One reason is that Borlaug's deeds are done in nations remote from the media spotlight: the Western press covers tragedy and strife in poor countries, but has little to say about progress there. Another reason is that Borlaug's mission—to cause the environment to produce significantly more food—has come to be seen, at least by some securely



affluent commentators, as perhaps better left undone. More food sustains human population growth, which they see as antithetical to the natural world.

The Ford and Rockefeller Foundations and the World Bank, once sponsors of his work, have recently given Borlaug the cold shoulder. Funding institutions have also cut support for the International Maize and Wheat Center—located in Mexico and known by its Spanish acronym, CIMMYT—where Borlaug helped to develop the high-yield, low-pesticide dwarf wheat upon which a substantial portion of the world's population now depends for sustenance. And though Borlaug's achievements are arguably the greatest that Ford or Rockefeller has ever funded, both foundations have retreated from the last effort of Borlaug's long life: the attempt to bring high-yield agriculture to Africa.

The African continent is the main place where food production has not kept pace with population growth: its potential for a Malthusian catastrophe is great. Borlaug's initial efforts in a few African nations have yielded the same rapid increases in food production as did his initial efforts on the Indian subcontinent in the 1960s. Nevertheless, Western environmental groups have campaigned against introducing high-yield farming techniques to Africa, and have persuaded image-sensitive organizations such as the Ford Foundation and the World Bank to steer clear of Borlaug. So far the only prominent support for Borlaug's Africa project has come from former President Jimmy Carter, a humanist and himself a farmer, and from the late mediagenic multimillionaire Japanese industrialist Ryoichi Sasakawa.

Reflecting Western priorities, the debate about whether high-yield agriculture would be good for Africa is currently phrased mostly in environmental terms, not in terms of saving lives. By producing more food from less land, Borlaug argues, high-yield farming will preserve Africa's wild habitats, which are now being depleted by slash-and-burn subsistence agriculture. Opponents argue that inorganic fertilizers and controlled irrigation will bring a new environmental stress to the one continent where the chemical-based approach to food production has yet to catch on. In this debate the moral imperative of food for the world's malnourished—whether they “should” have been born or not, they must eat—stands in danger of being forgotten.

THE LESSON OF THE DUST BOWL

NORMAN Borlaug was born in Cresco, Iowa, in 1914. Ideas being tested in Iowa around the time of his boyhood would soon transform the American Midwest into “the world's breadbasket,” not only annually increasing total production—so methodically that the increases were soon taken for granted—but annually improving yield, growing more bushels of grain from the same amount of land or

less. From about 1950 until the 1980s midwestern farmers improved yields by around three percent a year, more than doubling the overall yield through the period. This feat of expansion was so spectacular that some pessimists declared it was a special case that could never be repeated. But it has been done again, since around 1970, in China.

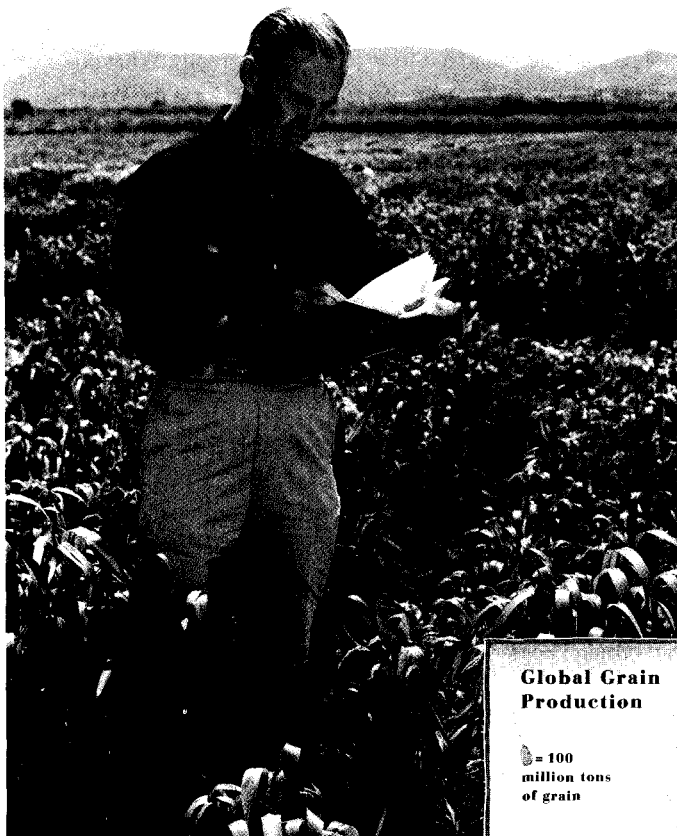
Entering college as the Depression began, Borlaug worked for a time in the Northeastern Forestry Service, often with men from the Civilian Conservation Corps, occasionally dropping out of school to earn money to finish his degree in forest management. He passed the civil-service exam and was accepted into the Forest Service, but the job fell through. He then began to pursue a graduate degree in plant pathology. During his studies he did a research project on the movement of spores of rust, a class of fungus that plagues many crops. The project, undertaken when the existence of the jet stream was not yet known, established that rust-spore clouds move internationally in sync with harvest cycles—a surprising finding at the time. The process opened Borlaug's eyes to the magnitude of the world beyond Iowa's borders.

At the same time, the Midwest was becoming the Dust Bowl. Though some mythology now attributes the Dust Bowl to a conversion to technological farming methods, in Borlaug's mind the problem was the lack of such methods. Since then American farming has become far more technological, and no Dust Bowl conditions have recurred. In the summer of 1988 the Dakotas had a drought as bad as that in the Dust Bowl, but clouds of soil were rare because few crops failed. Borlaug was horrified by the Dust Bowl and simultaneously impressed that its effects seemed least where high-yield approaches to farming were being tried. He decided that his life's work would be to spread the benefits of high-yield farming to the many nations where crop failures as awful as those in the Dust Bowl were regular facts of life.

In 1943 the Rockefeller Foundation established the precursor to CIMMYT to assist the poor farmers of Mexico, doing so at the behest of the former Secretary of Agriculture Henry Wallace, of the Pioneer Hi-Bred seed company family, who had been unable to extract any money from Congress for agricultural aid to Mexico. Soon Borlaug was in Mexico as the director of the wheat program—a job for which there was little competition, backwater Mexico in the 1940s not being an eagerly sought-after posting. Except for brief intervals, he has lived in the developing world since.

The program's initial goal was to teach Mexican farmers new farming ideas, but Borlaug soon had the institution seeking agricultural innovations. One was “shuttle breeding,” a technique for speeding up the movement of disease immunity between strains of crops. Borlaug also developed cereals that were insensitive to the number of hours of light in a day, and could therefore be grown in many climates.

Borlaug's leading research achievement was to hasten the perfection of dwarf spring wheat. Though it is conventional-



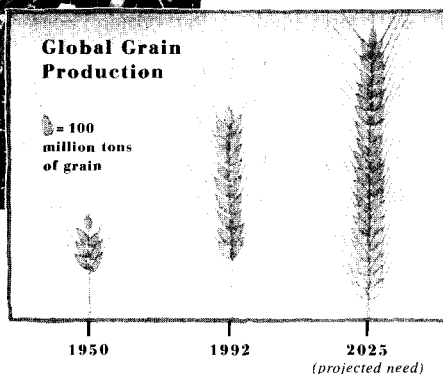
ly assumed that farmers want a tall, impressive-looking harvest, in fact shrinking wheat and other crops has often proved beneficial. Bred for short stalks, plants expend less energy on growing inedible column sections and more on growing valuable grain. Stout, short-stalked wheat also neatly supports its kernels, whereas tall-stalked wheat may bend over at maturity, complicating reaping. Nature has favored genes for tall stalks, because in nature plants must compete for access to sunlight. In high-yield agriculture equally short-stalked plants will receive equal sunlight. As Borlaug labored to perfect his wheat, researchers were seeking dwarf strains of rice at the International Rice Research Institute, in the Philippines, another of the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations' creations, and at China's Hunan Rice Research Institute.

Once the Rockefeller's Mexican program was producing high-yield dwarf wheat for Mexico, Borlaug began to argue that India and other nations should switch to cereal crops. The proposition was controversial then and remains so today, some environmental commentators asserting that farmers in the developing world should grow indigenous crops (lentils

in India, cassava in Africa) rather than the grains favored in the West. Borlaug's argument was simply that since no one had yet perfected high-yield strains of indigenous plants (high-yield cassava has only recently been available), CIMMYT wheat would produce the most food calories for the developing world. Borlaug particularly favored wheat because it grows in nearly all environments and requires relatively little pesticide, having an innate resistance to insects.

CIMMYT's selectively bred wheat, no longer a wholly natural plant, would not prosper without fertilizer and irrigation, however. High-yield crops sprout with great enthusiasm, but the better plants grow, the more moisture they demand and the faster they deplete soil nutrients. Like most agronomists, Borlaug has always advocated using organic fertilizers—usually manure—to restore soil nutrients. But the way to attain large quantities of manure is to have large herds of livestock, busily consuming the grain that would otherwise feed people.

Inorganic fertilizers based on petroleum and other minerals can renew soil on a global scale—at least as long as the petroleum holds out.



Perhaps more than anyone else, Norman Borlaug is responsible for the fact that except in sub-Saharan Africa, food production has expanded faster than the human population, averting the mass starvations that were widely predicted.

July, 1961: Borlaug in Toluca, Mexico

THE GREEN REVOLUTION

TO Borlaug, the argument for high-yield cereal crops, inorganic fertilizers, and irrigation became irrefutable when the global population began to take off after the Second World War. But many governments of developing nations were suspicious, partly for reasons of tradition (wheat was then a foreign substance in India) and partly because contact between Western technical experts and peasant farmers might shake up feudal cultures to the discomfort of the elite classes. Meanwhile, some commentators were suggesting that it would be wrong to increase the food supply in the developing world: better to let nature do the dirty work of restraining the human population.

Yet statistics suggest that high-yield agriculture brakes population growth rather than accelerating it, by starting the progression from the high-birth-rate, high-death-rate societies of feudal cultures toward the low-birth-rate, low-death-rate societies of Western nations. As the former Indian diplomat Karan Singh is reported to have said, "Development is the best contraceptive." In subsistence agriculture children are viewed as manual labor, and thus large numbers are desired. In technical agriculture knowledge becomes more im-

portant, and parents thus have fewer children in order to devote resources to their education.

In 1963 the Rockefeller Foundation and the government of Mexico established CIMMYT, as an outgrowth of their original program, and sent Borlaug to Pakistan and India, which were then descending into famine. He failed in his initial efforts to persuade the parastatal seed and grain monopolies that those countries had established after independence to switch to high-yield crop strains.

Despite the institutional resistance Borlaug stayed in Pakistan and India, tirelessly repeating himself. By 1965 famine on the subcontinent was so bad that governments made a commitment to dwarf wheat. Borlaug arranged for a convoy of thirty-five trucks to carry high-yield seeds from CIMMYT to a Los Angeles dock for shipment. The convoy was held up by the Mexican police, blocked by U.S. border agents attempting to enforce a ban on seed importation, and then stopped by the National Guard when the Watts riot prevented access to the L.A. harbor. Finally the seed ship sailed. Borlaug says, "I went to bed thinking the problem was at last solved, and woke up to the news that war had broken out between India and Pakistan."

Nevertheless, Borlaug and many local scientists who were his former trainees in Mexico planted the first crop of dwarf wheat on the subcontinent, sometimes working within sight of artillery flashes. Sowed late, that crop germinated poorly, yet yields still rose 70 percent. This prevented general wartime starvation in the region, though famine did strike parts of India. There were also riots in the state of Kerala in 1966, when a population whose ancestors had for centuries eaten rice was presented with sacks of wheat flour originating in Borlaug's fields.

Owing to wartime emergency, Borlaug was given the go-ahead to circumvent the parastatals. "Within a few hours of that decision I had all the seed contracts signed and a much larger planting effort in place," he says. "If it hadn't been for the war, I might never have been given true freedom to test these ideas." The next harvest "was beautiful, a 98 percent improvement." By 1968 Pakistan was self-sufficient in wheat production. India required only a few years longer. Paul Ehrlich had written in *The Population Bomb* (1968) that it was "a fantasy" that India would "ever" feed itself. By 1974 India was self-sufficient in the production of all cereals. Pakistan progressed from harvesting 3.4 million tons of wheat annually when Borlaug arrived to around 18 million today, India from 11 million tons to 60 million. In both nations food production since the 1960s has increased faster than the rate of population growth. Briefly in the mid-1980s India even entered the world export market for grains.

Borlaug's majestic accomplishment came to be labeled the Green Revolution. Whether it was really a revolution is open to debate. As Robert Kates, a former director of the World Hunger Program, at Brown University, says, "If you plot

growth in farm yields over the century, the 1960s period does not particularly stand out for overall global trends. What does stand out is the movement of yield increases from the West to the developing world, and Borlaug was one of the crucial innovators there." Touring the subcontinent in the late 1960s and encountering field after field of robust wheat, Forrest Frank Hill, a former vice-president of the Ford Foundation, told Borlaug, "Enjoy this now, because nothing like it will ever happen to you again. Eventually the naysayers and the bureaucrats will choke you to death, and you won't be able to get permission for more of these efforts."

THE HIGH-YIELD BOOM

FOR some time this augury seemed mistaken, as Borlaug's view of agriculture remained ascendant. In 1950 the world produced 692 million tons of grain for 2.2 billion people; by 1992 production was 1.9 billion tons for 5.6 billion people—2.8 times the grain for 2.2 times the population. Global grain yields rose from 0.45 tons per acre to 1.1 tons; yields of corn, rice, and other foodstuffs improved similarly. From 1965 to 1990 the globe's daily per capita intake grew from 2,063 calories to 2,495, with an increased proportion as protein. Malnutrition continued as a problem of global scale but decreased in percentage terms, even as more than two billion people were added to the population.

The world's 1950 grain output of 692 million tons came from 1.7 billion acres of cropland, the 1992 output of 1.9 billion tons from 1.73 billion acres—a 170 percent increase from one percent more land. "Without high-yield agriculture," Borlaug says, "either millions would have starved or increases in food output would have been realized through drastic expansion of acres under cultivation—losses of pristine land a hundred times greater than all losses to urban and suburban expansion."

The trend toward harvesting more from fewer acres, often spun in the media as a shocking crisis of "vanishing farms," is perhaps the most environmentally favorable development of the modern age. Paul Waggoner, of the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station, says, "From long before Malthus until about forty-five years ago each person took more land from nature than his parents did. For the past forty-five years people have been taking less land from nature than their parents."

In developing nations where population growth is surging, high-yield agriculture holds back the rampant deforestation of wild areas. Waggoner calculates that India's transition to high-yield farming spared the country from having to plough an additional 100 million acres of virgin land—an area about equivalent to California. In the past five years India has been able to slow and perhaps even halt its national deforestation, a hopeful sign. This would have been impossible were India still feeding itself with traditionally cultivated indigenous crops.



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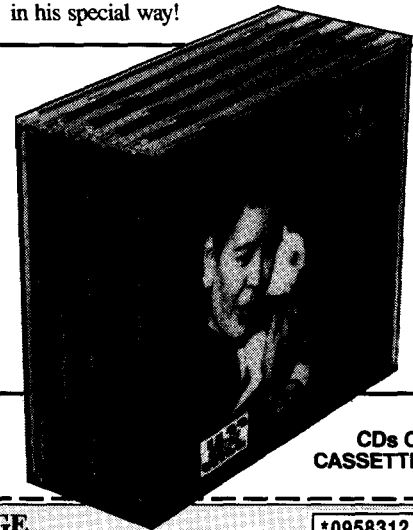
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BACKLASH

NONETHELESS, by the 1980s finding fault with high-yield agriculture had become fashionable. Environmentalists began to tell the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations and Western governments that high-yield techniques would despoil the developing world. As Borlaug turned his attention to high-yield projects for Africa, where mass starvation still seemed a plausible threat, some green organizations became determined to stop him there. "The environmental community in the 1980s went crazy pressuring the donor countries and the big foundations not to support ideas like inorganic fertilizers for Africa," says David Seckler, the director of the International Irrigation Management Institute.

Environmental lobbyists persuaded the Ford Foundation and the World Bank to back off from most African agriculture projects. The Rockefeller Foundation largely backed away too—though it might have in any case, because it was shifting toward an emphasis on biotechnological agricultural research. "World Bank fear of green political pressure in Washington became the single biggest obstacle to feeding Africa," Borlaug says. The green parties of Western Europe persuaded most of their governments to stop supplying fertilizer to Africa; an exception was Norway, which has a large crown corporation that makes fertilizer and avidly promotes its use. Borlaug, once an honored presence at the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations, became, he says, "a tar baby to them politically, because all the ideas the greenies couldn't stand were sticking to me."

Borlaug's reaction to the campaign was anger. He says, "Some of the environmental lobbyists of the Western nations are the salt of the earth, but many of them are elitists. They've never experienced the physical sensation of hunger. They do their lobbying from comfortable office suites in Washington or Brussels. If they lived just one month amid the misery of the developing world, as I have for fifty years, they'd be crying out for tractors and fertilizer and irrigation canals and be outraged that fashionable elitists back home were trying to deny them these things."

In 1984, at the age of seventy-one, Borlaug was drawn out of retirement by Ryoichi Sasakawa, who with Jimmy Carter was working to get African agriculture moving. Carter was campaigning in favor of fertilizer aid to Africa, as he still does today. The former President had fallen in with Sasakawa, who during the Second World War had founded the National Essence Mass Party, a Japanese fascist group, but who in later life developed a conscience. Today the Sasakawa Peace Foundation is a leading supporter of disarmament initiatives; Carter and Sasakawa often made joint appearances for worthy causes.

Sasakawa called Borlaug, who related his inability to obtain World Bank or foundation help for high-yield-agriculture initiatives in Africa. Sasakawa was dumbfounded that a Nobel Peace Prize winner couldn't get backing for a philan-

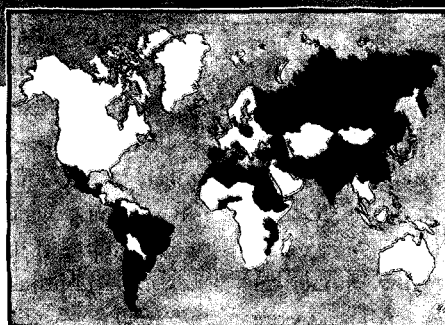
thropic endeavor. He offered to fund Borlaug in Africa for five years. Borlaug said, "I'm seventy-one. I'm too old to start again." Sasakawa replied, "I'm fifteen years older than you, so I guess we should have started yesterday." Borlaug, Carter, and Sasakawa traveled to Africa to pick sites, and the foundation Sasakawa-Global 2000 was born. "I assumed we'd do a few years of research first," Borlaug says, "but after I saw the terrible circumstances there, I said, 'Let's just start growing.'" Soon Borlaug was running projects in Benin, Ethiopia, Ghana, Nigeria, Sudan, Tanzania, and Togo. Yields of corn quickly tripled; yields of wheat, cassava, sorghum, and cow peas also grew.

Borlaug made progress even in Sudan, near the dry Sahel, though that project ended with the onset of Sudan's civil war, in 1992. Only Sasakawa's foundation came forward with more funds, but although well endowed, it is no World Bank. Environmentalists continued to say that chemical fertilizers would cause an ecological calamity in Africa.

Opponents of high-yield agriculture "took the numbers for water pollution caused by fertilizer runoff in the United States and applied them to Africa, which is totally fallacious," David Seckler says. "Chemical-fertilizer use in Africa is so tiny you could increase application for decades before causing the environmental side effects we see here. Meanwhile, Africa is ruining its wildlife habitat with slash-and-burn farming, which many commentators romanticize because it is indigenous." Borlaug found that some foundation managers and World Bank officials had become hopelessly confused regarding the distinction between pesticides and fertilizer. He says, "The opponents of high-yield for Africa were speaking of the two as if they were the same because they're both made from chemicals, when the scales of toxicity are vastly different. Fertilizer only replaces substances naturally present in the soils anyway."

In Africa and throughout the developing world Borlaug and most other agronomists now teach forms of "integrated pest management," which reduces pesticide use because chemicals are sprayed at the most vulnerable point in an insect's life cycle. Borlaug says, "All serious agronomists know that pesticides must be kept to a minimum, and besides, pesticides are expensive. But somehow the media believe the overspraying is still going on, and this creates a bias against high-yield agriculture." Indonesia has for nearly a decade improved rice yields while reducing pesticide use by employing integrated pest management. The use of pesticides has been in decline relative to farm production for more than a decade in the United States, where the use of fertilizer, too, has started declining relative to production.

Such developments have begun to sway some of Borlaug's opposition. The Committee on Sustainable Agriculture, a coalition of environmental and development-oriented groups, has become somewhat open to fertilizer use in Africa. "The environmental movement went through a phase of revulsion



Where Borlaug has worked

against any chemical use in agriculture," says Robert Blake, the committee's chairman. "People are coming to realize that is just not realistic. Norman has been right about this all along." One reason the ground is shifting back in his direction, Borlaug believes, is that the green parties of Europe have been frightened by the sudden wave of migrants entering their traditionally low-immigration nations, and now think that improving conditions in Africa isn't such a bad idea after all.

Supposing that opposition to high-yield agriculture for Africa declines, the question becomes What can be accomplished there? Pierre Crosson, an agricultural analyst for the nonpartisan think tank Resources for the Future, calculates that sub-Saharan Africa needs to increase farm yields by 3.3 percent annually for the next thirty years merely to keep pace with the population growth that is projected. This means that Africa must do what the American Midwest did.

"Africa has the lowest farm yields in the world and also a large amount of undeveloped land, so in theory a huge increase in food production could happen," says John Bongaarts, the research director of the Population Council, a non-profit international research organization. "If southern Sudan was parked in the Midwest, they'd be growing stuff like crazy there now." Practical problems, however, make Bongaarts think that rapid African yield increases are "extremely unlikely in the near future." The obvious obstacles are desperate poverty and lack of social cohesion. When Borlaug

Environmental groups have campaigned against introducing high-yield farming to Africa. The moral imperative of food for the malnourished—whether they "should" have been born or not, they must eat—stands in danger of being forgotten.

Ryoichi Sasakawa, Jimmy Carter, and Norman Borlaug, 1989

transformed the agriculture of Pakistan and India, those nations had many problems but also reasonably well organized economies, good road and rail systems, irrigation projects under way, and an established entrepreneurial ethos. Much of Africa lacks these.

Additionally, African countries often lack a social focus on increasing agricultural output. Young men, especially, consider the farm a backwater from which they long to escape to the city. African governments and technical ministries tend to look down on food production as an old-fashioned economic sector, longing instead for high-tech facilities that suggest Western prestige and power. Yet a basic reason that the United States and the European Union nations are so strong is that they have achieved almost total mastery over agriculture, producing ample food at ever-lower prices.

An encouraging example of an African government taking a progressive view of agriculture comes from Ethiopia, where, since the end of its civil war, Borlaug has run his most successful African project. Visiting Ethiopia in 1994, Jimmy Carter took Prime Minister Meles Zenawi on a tour of places where Borlaug's ideas could be tested, and won Zenawi's support for an extension-service campaign to aid farmers. During the 1995–1996 season Ethiopia

recorded the greatest harvests of major crops in its history, with a 32 percent increase in production and a 15 percent increase in average yield over the previous season. Use of the fertilizer diammonium phosphate was the key reform. The rapid yield growth suggests that other sub-Saharan countries may also have hope for increased food production.

Whether Africa can increase its food production may soon become one of *the* questions of international affairs. It may be one at which, in a decade or two, Western governments will frantically throw money after a crisis hits, whereas more-moderate investments begun now might avert the day of reckoning. And one of *the* questions of the next century may be whether the world can feed itself at all.

10 BILLION MOUTHS

HIS opponents may not know it, but Borlaug has long warned of the dangers of population growth. "In my Nobel lecture," Borlaug says, "I suggested we had until the year 2000 to tame the population monster, and then food shortages would take us under. Now I believe we have a little longer. The Green Revolution can make Africa productive. The breakup of the former Soviet Union has caused its grain output to plummet, but if the new republics recover economically, they could produce vast amounts of food. More fertilizer can make the favored lands of Latin America—especially Argentina and Brazil—more productive. The *cerrado* region of Brazil, a very large area long assumed to be infertile because of toxic soluble aluminum in the soil, may become a breadbasket, because aluminum-resistant crop strains are being developed." This last is an example of agricultural advances and environmental protection going hand in hand: in the past decade the deforestation rate in the Amazon rain forest has declined somewhat, partly because the *cerrado* now looks more attractive.

Borlaug continues, "But Africa, the former Soviet republics, and the *cerrado* are the last frontiers. After they are in use, the world will have no additional sizable blocks of arable land left to put into production, unless you are willing to level whole forests, which you should not do. So future food-production increases will have to come from higher yields. And though I have no doubt yields will keep going up, whether they can go up enough to feed the population monster is another matter. Unless progress with agricultural yields remains very strong, the next century will experience sheer human misery that, on a numerical scale, will exceed the worst of everything that has come before."

But "very strong" progress on yields seems problematic. John Bongaarts calculates that agricultural yields outside Western countries must double in the coming century merely to maintain current—and inadequate—nutrition levels. The United Nations projects that human numbers will reach about 9.8 billion, from about 5.8 billion today, around the year 2050. To bring the entire world's diet in that year to a level comparable to that of the West, Bongaarts calculates, would require a 430 percent increase in food production.

Lester Brown, the head of the Worldwatch Institute, an environmental organization, fears that China may soon turn from an agricultural success story into a nation of shortages. Because much of it is mountainous, China already uses most of its attractive tillage area, leaving scant room for expansion. Its remarkable improvements in wheat and rice yields have come in part, Brown thinks, at the expense of depleting the national water table: irrigation water may soon become scarce. As newly affluent Chinese consumers demand more chicken and beef, feeding increased amounts of grain to animals may cause grain scarcity. If, as some experts project,

the Chinese population rises from 1.2 billion to 1.6 billion, yield increases will not bridge the difference, Brown fears.

Privatization and dwarf rice have enabled China to raise rice yields rapidly to about 1.6 tons per acre—close to the world's best figure of two tons. But recently rice-yield increases have flattened. The International Rice Research Institute is working on a new strain that may boost yields dramatically, but whether it will prosper in the field is unknown. Ismail Serageldin, the chairman of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research, in Washington, D.C., believes that the "biological maximum" for rice yield is about seven tons per acre—four times today's average in developing countries, but perhaps a line that cannot be crossed.

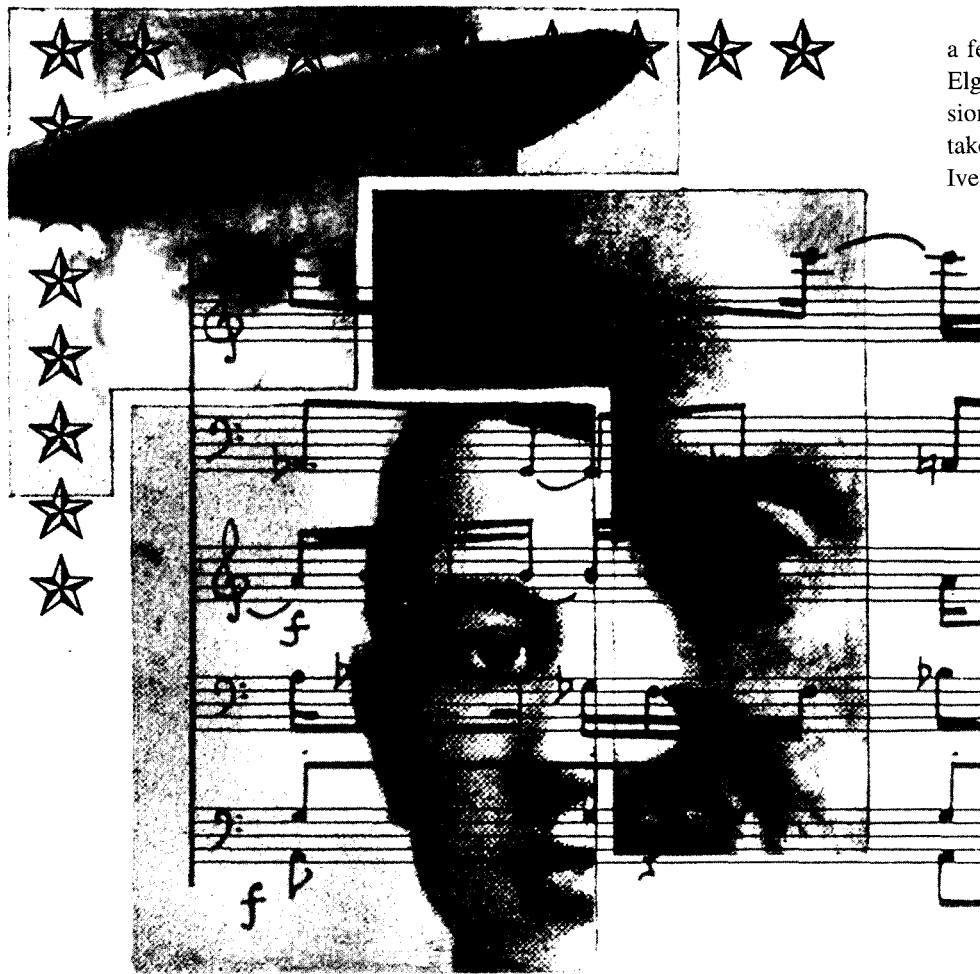
An important unknown is whether genetic engineering will improve agricultural yields. Corn is among the highest-yielding plants. "If the high natural multiples of maize could be transferred by gene engineering to wheat or rice, there could be a tremendous world yield improvement," Paul Waggoner, of the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station, says. So far genetic engineering has not produced any higher-yielding strains, though it does show promise for reducing pesticide application. Some researchers also think that biotechnology will be able to pack more protein and minerals into cereal grains. Others, Borlaug among them, are skeptical about whether yield itself can be engineered. So far gene recombination can move only single genes or small contiguous gene units. Borlaug says, "Unless there is one master gene for yield, which I'm guessing there is not, engineering for yield will be very complex. It may happen eventually, but through the coming decades we must assume that gene engineering will not be the answer to the world's food problems."

Today Borlaug divides his time among CIMMYT, where he teaches young scientists seeking still-more-productive crop strains for the developing world; Texas A&M, where he teaches international agriculture every fall semester; and the Sasakawa-Global 2000 projects that continue to operate in twelve African nations.

Borlaug's Africa project is a private-sector effort run by an obscure Nobel Peace Prize winner and a former American President whose altruistic impulses are made sport of in the American press. Its goal is something the West seems almost to have given up on—the rescue of Africa from human suffering. Recently Western governments have been easing out of African aid, pleading "donor fatigue," the difficulty of overcoming corruption, and fear of criticism from the environmental lobby. Private organizations, including Borlaug's, Catholic Relief Services, and Oxfam, carry on what's left of the fight.

If overpopulation anarchy comes, it is likely to arrive first in Africa. Borlaug understands this, and is using his remaining years to work against that cataclysm. The odds against him seem long. But then, Norman Borlaug has already saved more lives than any other person who ever lived. ☘





The Many Faces of Ives

This year's Charles Ives is another illustration of how protean our most American composer remains

COMPOSING serious music still seems to be an un-American activity. Our composers are caught between rock—or jazz or Broadway—and the hardened repertoire of the concert hall. If they aim low, the critics accuse them of writing bad imitations of good popular music. If they aim high, their music is dismissed as “European”—a code word implying that the music is derivative, abstruse,

and snooty. If they aim for the bland accessibility audiences are willing to tolerate, their music will be played once or twice and then justifiably forgotten.

by David Schiff

What would it take to make American music unequivocally American?

Assuming for the moment that this is desirable, it would take a composer whose work both addressed a broad public and was serious in its emotional or ethical concerns. The music would both induce

a feeling of national nostalgia, the way Elgar's does for the English, and envision our brash future. In short, it would take—or should have taken—a Charles Ives. Ives has been hailed as the found-

ing father of American music ever since his *Concord Sonata* was first performed, in 1939. Yet the man, the music, and most of all the contradictory myths surrounding Ives only heighten the suspicion with which Americans view their native concert music.

Since the 1930s every generation of American composers has reimagined Ives in its own image. In his fine new biography, *Charles Ives: A Life With Music*, Jan Swafford lists some of Ives's manifestations: the “Ultra-modernist, the Nationalist, the amateur, the primitive, the atavist, the neurotic, the sly fabricator of his own myth.” Ives has been used to authenticate everything from cowboy tunes to conceptualism. In one decade Ives seemed like Whitman; in the next he was compared, by Leonard Bernstein, to Grandma Moses. A man who had lived most of his life in New York City was clothed in homespun and pictured on record albums in front of a comfortable Connecticut summer home made to look like a log cabin. And today he is a proto-postmodernist.

In art, as in life, it takes two to tango. Different movements in American music have needed different founding fathers, but Ives's works are a bottomless grab bag of contradictory achievements and promises. You can find a piece somewhere to support every mutation of the Ives myth. The early Second Symphony, Bernstein's favorite, reveals Ives as a nostalgic nationalist and a lovable bad boy—and also as a composer in full command of the European symphonic idiom of Brahms and Dvřák. *The Unanswered Question* and *Central Park in the Dark*, with their divided orchestras moving at different speeds, show us Ives the vanguardist, who not long ago was typically praised as the forerunner of Karlheinz Stockhausen. Today Ives's powerful use of hymns in the Fourth

Symphony makes him the predecessor of the "new spirituality" heard in Górecki's Third Symphony, and his use of popular materials makes him the progenitor of crossover. Domestic one day, cosmic the next, delightfully "bad," transcendently "good"—the mythological Ives is a trickster god.

LAST August the Bard Music Festival, in Annandale-on-Hudson, New York, presented a rediscovery of Ives, an intensive encounter with his music, the music of his contemporaries, and the current state of Ives scholarship. The model of the Ives myth that emerged from the festival's panels might be called Ives the normal. The academic pendulum is, predictably, swinging back from the model of Ives the weird, which prevailed for thirty years, starting in the 1960s, when the professional isolation in which Ives worked (he split his life between music and the insurance business, where he was a great innovator and earned a large fortune) made him an honorary grandfather of the counterculture and every freakout to come. Ives's "abnormality" also had several dark sides—Ives the prevaricator, Ives the homophobe, Ives the misogynist. Extrapolating from certain comments by Elliott Carter, who knew Ives in the twenties and remembered his "adding dissonances" to works he had written earlier, the musicologist Maynard Solomon in 1987 described Ives as a borderline personality who chronically lied about his music in order to appear more innovative than he really was—a serious charge against the George Washington of music.

The most telling symptom according to subscribers to the weird model was Ives's apparent obsession with manliness. He dismissed any men he did not like as sissies or lilies or just girls. To the ears of today's scholars these were the homophobic ravings of a closet case; the charge was further substantiated when it was learned that Ives broke with his close friend Henry Cowell when Cowell was arrested for what was then called the corruption of minors. Even if Ives was not pathological, his letters and other writings showed that for him good music was a "guy thing"—a stance that would not endear him to feminists. Rather than the father of American music,

Ives now looked like some embarrassingly eccentric uncle, the black sheep of the musical family.

J. Peter Burkholder, a professor of musicology at Indiana University and America's leading Ivesian, was an important member of the Bard program committee and set out to rehabilitate Ives. Although the issues of homophobia and misogyny disrupted a few of the panel discussions, the thrust of most presentations was to place Ives in the musical and psychological mainstream. To counter Solomon's fatal charge of mendacity, Gayle Sherwood, a musicologist at the University of Michigan, presented her findings about the birth dates of Ives's works. Using the dating of manuscript paper and other forensic techniques, she largely confirmed the composer's own accounts—though she admitted that he made some small revisions. Jan Swafford wept as he read the letter in which Ives reminded his wife of the love they had expressed for each other as they walked beside the Housatonic River at Stockbridge—a scene Ives glowingly re-created in *Three Places in New England*. Rather than working in isolation, Ives was shown to be actively involved in getting his music performed and in aiding other composers, such as Lou Harrison and Henry Cowell. Ives, we heard, was a loving husband, a doting uncle, an astute businessman. This year's founding father knew best.

Yet the Ives oeuvre is not quite what meets the eye. I was jolted when Jan Swafford told me that he did not consider one of my favorite works, the First Piano Sonata, to be completely the work of Ives. Ives sketched it, Swafford said, and then, dissatisfied, abandoned it; later, editors such as John Kirkpatrick and Lou Harrison reassembled some portions and published it as Ives's work. Swafford was particularly dubious about claims made for the *Universe Symphony*, a long-standing project that Ives notated only in a few fragments, yet one that has recently appeared on a recording and been hailed by some critics as Ives's masterpiece. Whatever the composer's intentions toward this project may have been, the claims for it as music for all of humankind to perform from the mountaintops complement current political and environmental fantasies. Why not

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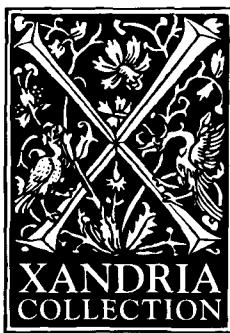
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enlist Ives as the founder of cultural diversity, New Age spirituality, and the green movement? In the huge pile of his sketches there seems to be a scrap to serve every purpose.

Making Ives's music "normal" is a trickier task. In his several books on Ives, Burkholder ties the composer's pieces to European and American traditions. He has tried to demonstrate that Ives's use of hymns, popular songs, and classical themes, rather than being eccentric, was a deliberate and successful aesthetic strategy—a way of expressing the diversity of American society. Departing even further from the previous view of the isolated Ives, Burkholder claims that Ives calculated his music carefully for its intended audience, and that it expressed the values and experiences of the community in which he was raised. This is where I begin to roll my eyes. Except for his wife and a few enthusiasts, most of Ives's contemporaries, in particular local musicians, assumed that his music was either a bad joke or the work of a crank; Ives was surprised and disturbed by their incomprehension. One of many oddities about Ives's music is that for listeners today it vividly recreates a vanished rural, patriotic America—an America that in Ives's own time had no use for his music. It's not easy being a nostalgic futurist—but that's what Ives was.

Perhaps I am just an unreconstructed member of the weird camp. Though the scholars at the Bard festival closed ranks behind the normal Ives, the concerts demonstrated over and over again just how marvelously and disturbingly abnormal Ives's music was in its time and is today. Leon Botstein, the president of Bard College and one of the directors of the festival, has developed thematic programming into a form of performance scholarship. Every concert placed Ives's music in a different context: I could hear the composers who taught Ives and those who were influenced by him, and I could hear music that seemed to parallel his in a number of suggestive ways. Ives's music refused, though, to converse with the polite, adept imitations of Schumann and Brahms by his American contemporaries, or with the angular, well-etched masterpieces of the modernists, or with the reductive and oriental devices of the avant-garde. Messy,

sprawling, juvenile, jokey, but also highly evocative and inventive and quietly tragic—Ives's music emerged from all the concert contexts just as sui generis, or weird, as it has always been.

WHY are we still rediscovering Ives? Half Thomas Jefferson and half Huck Finn, Ives is the progenitor of our national ambivalence toward art music itself. He seemed to believe that music had to be either sublime or ridiculous. It could lead either to the spiritual redemption of mankind or to a good laugh—but it could not be merely an object of aesthetic contemplation, with no further purpose. His music resists the context of the classical concert altogether. More than thirty years ago Leonard Bernstein devoted himself to raising the reputations of two composers—Gustav Mahler and Ives. Since that time Mahler's music has taken its place at the heart of the orchestral repertory, but Ives still seems an alien presence in the concert hall. Out of his more than 110 songs maybe five or six have entered the recital repertory; the string quartets and piano sonatas remain occasional novelties; half the orchestral works are barely played, because they seem either immature, like the First Symphony, or bizarrely misconceived, like the cacophonous *Robert Browning Overture*. I don't think the special status accorded even Ives's finest works can any longer be explained by their technical difficulty; I believe instead that the ethical and spiritual images within the music set it against a concert world with which Ives could never make peace, even though he was a loyal follower of the Boston Symphony.

Ives's music conjures up idealized alternatives to the concert hall. It portrays imaginary town meetings, revival services, parades, football games. Ives was envisioning a civic space in which the music would define a community—a community that might contain many musicians and artisans but no "artists." His music is most effective when it sounds as if it were being played by amateurs, not by conservatory-trained professionals, and when it sounds like an improvisation, not a thought-out composition. The illusion is a most artful one. Ives's compositions, at least the ones he brought to a state of polished

completion, are difficult, fully composed works that demand to be played by the finest musicians. Yet they seem as embarrassed by their own artistry as by the artistry of the players who can actually master them. The members of the audience, too, are meant to feel not like aesthetic onlookers but like participants. Ironically, the hymns and popular songs that fill his music and turn listeners into a civic congregation are ever further removed from our experience: Ives invites us to a communion we are no longer prepared to attend. And so the immediacy of the music is blurred by our own soft-focus nostalgia for a lost world.

Where, then, does Ives's music belong? The work of two American composers who were not played at Bard might have resonated powerfully with Ives's music: Frank Zappa and Charles Mingus. Put *The Unanswered Question* next to *Peaches en Regalia*, or *General William Booth Enters Into Heaven* alongside *Fables of Faubus*, and you would really give an audience a new framework for Ives. Zappa's songs (more than his "serious" works) would be the perfect mirror for Ives's adolescent humor, his irrepressible assault on decorum and good taste.

Charles Mingus's music, which may someday seem even greater than that of Ives, would match the political and religious impulses of Ives's compositions. Mingus—who, like Ives, left a huge amount of unfinished music and various unrealized visionary projects—similarly composed music out of a passionate idealism and a powerful sense of history. Like Ives, Mingus often re-created the music of the past (in his case, pastiches of Jelly Roll Morton or Duke Ellington) and often placed his music within an imagined church service. Again like Ives, Mingus found ways of composing music so that it sounded improvised and often pushed his music to the edge of chaos—even over the edge, as if to register a protest against the boundaries of genre and expression. Much of Ives's music is jazz before the fact—not in its style or its cultural roots but in its provisional yet incantatory essence. Just picture Ives at the piano, trading fours with Mingus on bass—the White Saint and the Black Saint. The trickster gods can have many faces. ☼

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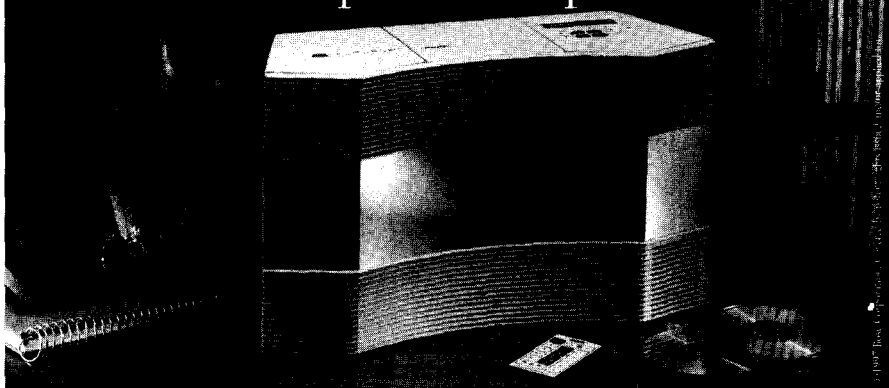
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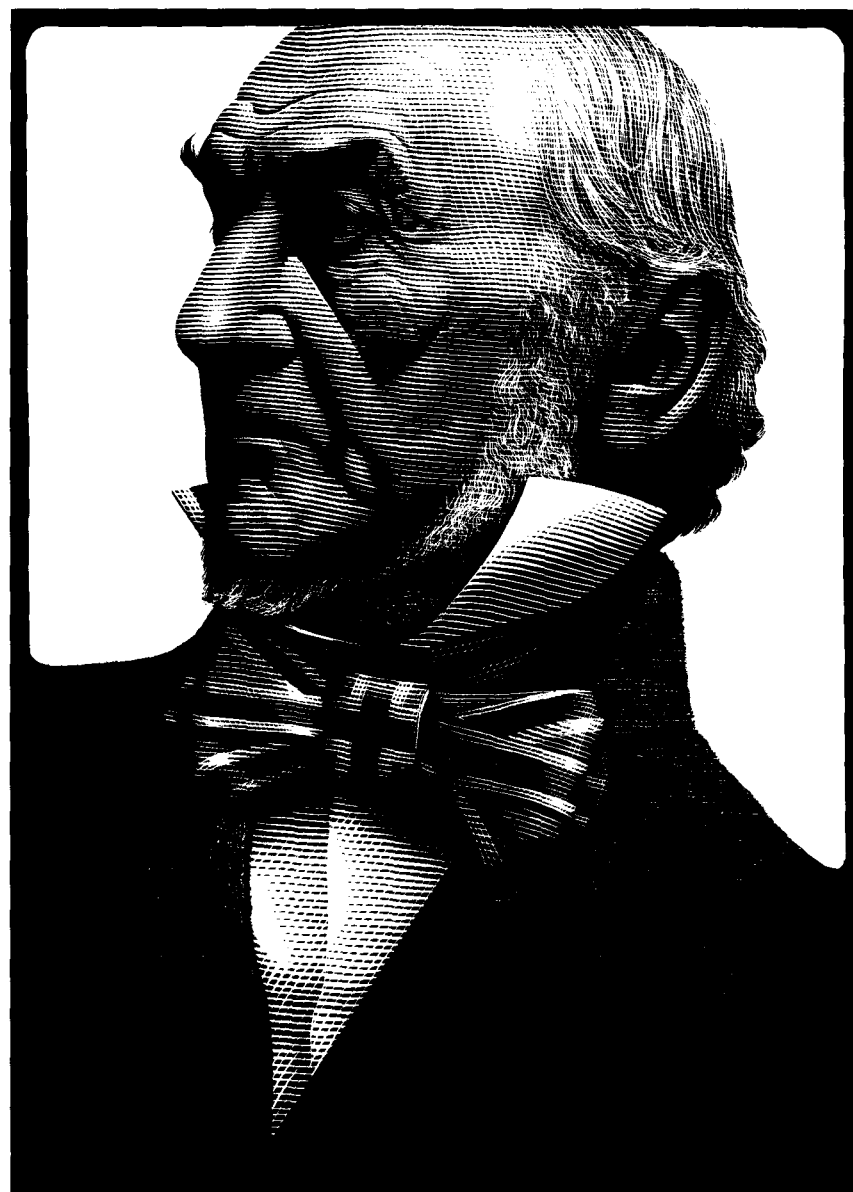
GLADSTONE

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ON March 3, 1894, William Ewart Gladstone resigned for the last time as Prime Minister of England. He was in his eighty-fifth year and had been a member of Parliament for more than sixty years, since his election, at twenty-two, to the first reformed Parliament, after the great Reform Bill of 1832 had adumbrated the gradual democratization of England. He had first joined the Cabinet at thirty-three, as the third youngest man ever to do so; he had become Prime Minister for the first time more than twenty-six years before his final departure; and he had held the office four times in all, in 1868–1874, in 1880–1885, for six months in 1886, and in 1892–1894.

The sheer length and scope of his public life make him stand alone in the history of his or any other country: Winston Churchill is the only comparison. It has been said that all political careers end in failure, and Gladstone might seem to illustrate the saying. When he finally left Downing Street, it was to the relief of most of his colleagues, with almost no thanks from Queen Victoria, who had come to detest him, and without accomplishing the great task of his later years—a just settlement for Ireland. For all that, Gladstone had done more with his life than another two or three politicians put together, and his legislative and financial record places him in the very first rank of English statesmen.

And yet what best defines this extraor-



inary man is the way in which he spent his last day as the leader of what was then the greatest power on earth. He recorded that he had been to church, written half a dozen letters, seen half a dozen people, "Read I. Hen. VI. And

finished my version of the Odes of Horace." Reading a Shakespeare play might seem unlikely enough in the circumstances, let alone completing a classical translation. But then, as Gladstone recorded in the breathtaking human doc-

ument that is his *Diaries*, he read during the course of his life at least 20,000 books in at least six languages, and he was an indefatigable writer, translator, and controversialist.

He had a wondrous ability to switch off from politics and write an enormously long article on church music, say, or a 15,000-word critical essay on Tennyson. Earlier in his career, when out of office for the moment, he had thought nothing of producing a four-volume translation of Farini's *Lo stato romano*. On one occasion when he had recently ceased to be Chancellor of the Exchequer, and on another when he had ceased to be Prime Minister, he published vast if idiosyncratic studies of Homer.

Some of what he wrote—an essay on Giacomo Leopardi, for example—is still worth reading, though his writing was uneven, partly because of his inexhaustible prolificity. This was itself an expression of the demonic energy that otherwise manifested itself in enormously long walks, in hill-climbing into old age, and in his most famous physical pastime of tree-felling (in the mordant phrase of Lord Randolph Churchill, father of Winston, “The forest laments, in order that Mr Gladstone may perspire”).

GLADSTONE'S latest biographer hesitates to claim that he was the greatest of all premiers; for one thing, unlike the two William Pitts, Lloyd George, and Churchill, he never led his country in the supreme test of war. But Roy Jenkins has “no doubt that he was the most remarkable specimen of humanity of all the fifty who, from [Robert] Walpole to [John] Major, have so far held the office of British Prime Minister.” Few who read this utterly absorbing life will disagree with him.

Prime Minister of England, I have called him, and he would have called himself, but by descent he was pure Scotch, as he would also have said. Although it is sometimes observed that our damp little island has a class system (as if other countries were innocent of class), the system has always been permeable by money. John Gladstone was not a gentleman but a corn merchant from Leith, near Edinburgh. He moved to Liverpool and made a larger fortune, partly from West Indian sugar, which is to say from slavery. His son William

was born in 1809, and those unlovely profits were used to give him a traditional upper-class education at Eton and Christ Church. Despite that, and despite marrying into a landed family, the Glynnes, whose estate at Hawarden, in northeast Wales, eventually passed to his descendants, Gladstone was all his life conscious of not belonging to the aristocracy.

Before the end of his days he was to become a byword for liberalism. Literally so: almost a hundred years after his death “Gladstonian Liberal” is still a phrase by which some of us are happy to describe ourselves. But this was after he had made the lengthiest possible political pilgrimage, having begun life as far on the other side as could be. His first Commons speech was in dutifully filial opposition to a slavery-abolition bill, and a few years later he was described by the essayist Thomas Babington Macaulay as “the rising hope of those stern and unbending Tories.” The phrase, which haunted Gladstone for years, was inspired by his first, truly bizarre book, *The State in its Relations With the Church*. It was a work of intellectual fanaticism, a last-ditch defense of the confessional state that Tory England had tried to construct and maintain since the Restoration, in 1660, with all office and power reserved to communicant members of the Established Church of England. At a time when Catholic emancipation had just been passed, and full Jewish emancipation was within sight, Gladstone proposed a Protestant Episcopalian theocracy not only in England (which could at least claim to be a Protestant country) but in Ireland also.

His slow political evolution was bound up with the turmoil of the middle decades of the century and the crisis over the repeal of the protectionist Corn Laws, a cause to which the brave and principled Sir Robert Peel was converted as a moral necessity. Gladstone served in Peel's Cabinet, and for years after Peel's death, in 1850, called himself a Peelite—a first stage in his escape from high Toryism. Peel had been harried to destruction by the brilliant and insolent young adventurer Benjamin Disraeli, who now became Gladstone's great rival in a contest that lasted three decades. From 1858 to 1868 one or the other was Chancellor of the Exchequer (which per-

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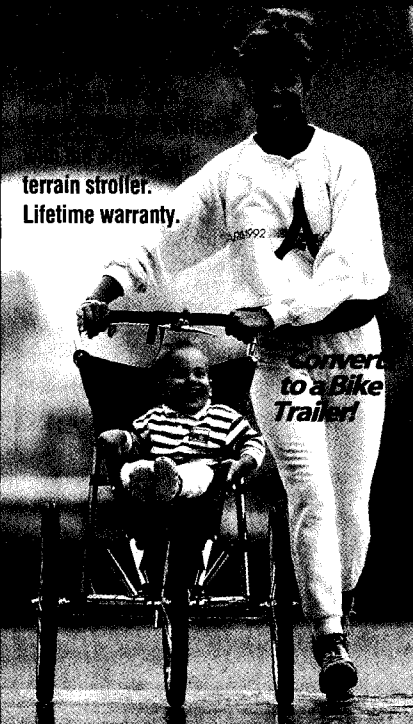
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sonal factor incidentally much increased the status of what had until then been a rather unimportant office), and from 1868 to 1885 one or the other was Prime Minister. The duel between them made a fascinating human and political contrast.

Given his background, and given England, Disraeli's career was heroic in its own way. Flippant, cynical, realistic or opportunistic according to taste, Disraeli was contemptuous of the intensely devout and earnest Gladstone, high-minded or self-righteous according to taste. The scorn was repaid in kind. In 1852 Disraeli's first, brief spell as Chancellor came to an abrupt end when—in that golden age of parliamentary government when party allegiances were fluid and votes could be swayed by argument—Gladstone rose in the Commons at 1:00 A.M. and demolished Disraeli's budget in a lethal speech. Without question Gladstone proved himself the better Chancellor when he held the post under Lord Aberdeen, Lord Palmerston, and Lord Russell—in fact, one of the greatest of all custodians of the public purse, as the sonorous phrase used to go.

By the time Gladstone became Prime Minister, in 1868, the Liberal Party had been born out of a coalition of Whigs, Peelites, and radicals, and Gladstone was by then indeed a Liberal, a believer in "peace, economy and reform." He was never a Whig, being temperamentally averse to that patrician cousinage, who were as easygoing in their public finances as in their private lives. His colleague Sir Charles Dilke spoke sourly of his "Scotch toadyism to the aristocracy," and he certainly spent much time touring ducal country houses. But those tours ended in the last years of his life, by which time he had become "the People's William," venerated by humble cottagers and laborers and execrated by the "upper ten thousand."

There are parallels here with Franklin D. Roosevelt, a later "class traitor" who inspired loathing among the rich. In 1882 Gladstone's private secretary, Edward Hamilton, described dinner with the Cavendish Bentincks:

I was the solitary Liberal. I am sure that if I had been a Tory all my life the bitterness and narrow-mindedness of my friends would have converted me to Radicalism. It is all indiscriminate abuse. Everything that

Mr. G. does must be wrong and wicked, and everything wrong and wicked that happens must be attributable to Mr. G.

The hatred may have been a little misplaced, since Gladstone was no radical either. Although he had become a great popular orator, addressing vast audiences on the stump, he was ill at ease in the new industrial cities, and once insisted, "I am an out-and-out *inequalitarian*." Toward the end of his life he wrote to the Queen (in one of the numerous didactic letters that so got on her nerves) deploring the political class divisions that for the first time had driven almost all people of property into the ranks of the Tories and that, along with Ireland, so envenomed the atmosphere in the decades flanking the turn of the century.

IN his thirties Gladstone had presciently written to his wife, "Ireland, Ireland! That cloud in the west, that coming storm, the vehicle of God's retribution. . . ." But in practice he had ignored the coming storm until the 1860s. If Ireland had impinged upon him, it was as a reproach to England's reputation abroad. For a man with such a keen sense of righteousness, who lectured reactionary foreign statesmen like Felix Schwarzenberg, of Austria, about the misrule of subject peoples, it was galling to have Ireland thrown back as a *tu quoque*, rather as moralizing Americans who wanted to denounce European colonialism or communist dictatorship used to be reminded of Jim Crow and the lynch mob. It was not Gladstone but Disraeli who had sardonically but succinctly summed up the Irish question in a Commons speech of 1844.

"A dense population inhabit an island where there is an established church which is not their church, and a territorial aristocracy, the richest of whom live in a distant capital. Thus they have a starving population, an alien church, and in addition the weakest executive in the world. . . . the Irish could not have a revolution and why? Because Ireland is connected with another and more powerful country. Then what is the consequence? . . . If the connection with England prevented a revolution and a revolution was the only remedy, England logically is in the odious position of being the

cause of all the misery of Ireland. What then is the duty of an English minister? To effect by his policy all those changes which a revolution would effect by force."

If he didn't acknowledge their inspiration, Gladstone belatedly took those words to heart and tried to act on them when he became Prime Minister. In 1869 he disestablished the Protestant Church of Ireland, and the following year he began to deal with the wretched system of land tenure that lay beneath so much Irish misery. Tentative and not very successful at first, his legislation commenced the slow process by which the old landlord class was eased out of Ireland.

After electoral defeat in 1874 Gladstone wanted to withdraw from politics, or claimed that he did. As always, he was inscrutable and unfathomable in his motives. Despite his keen intelligence, his self-knowledge was clouded by the belief that he was guided by a higher power. His religious conviction was total, not to say suffocating—on losing an election he sentimentiously consoled himself, "But One ever sitteth above"—and, as is often the case with men who think themselves so guided, he could give to others the impression of deviousness or even unscrupulousness.

Whatever he had really intended, he sprang back into political life in 1876 over the "Bulgarian Horrors." Liberal opinion was convulsed by atrocities in the Balkans (*plus ça change . . .*), in particular the massacre of more than 10,000 Bulgars by Turkish irregulars. Gladstone dashed off a ferociously eloquent pamphlet: "Let the Turks now carry away their abuses in the only possible manner, namely by carrying off themselves . . . one and all, bag and baggage, shall I hope clear out from the province they have desolated and profaned." The pamphlet sold an astonishing 200,000 copies (another pamphlet he had written a couple of years earlier, attacking the "Vatican decrees," the newly proclaimed doctrine of papal infallibility, had sold a scarcely less astonishing 150,000). Not everyone was enraptured. Gladstone sent a complimentary copy to the Prime Minister, which provoked from Lord Beaconsfield, as Disraeli had just become, one of his cruelest wisecracks: Gladstone's pamphlet was "of all the

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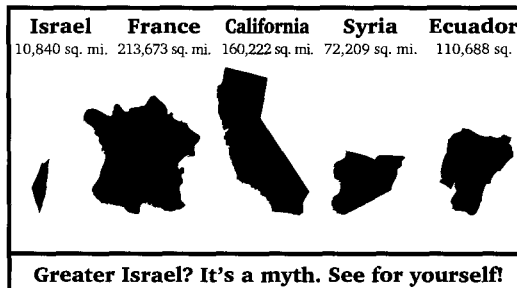
Stripes on the Flag. Arab propaganda has it that the two stripes on the flag of Israel, above and below the star of David, represent the Nile and the Euphrates River, respectively, and signify Israel's expansionist desire, to form an "empire" that would supposedly reach from Cairo to Baghdad. But that has no basis in fact, of course. Nowhere in any documents of the Jewish state, in any statement by even the most "radical" spokesman can reference to anything like that be found.

Israel's Borders. "Palestine," part of the Ottoman Empire before World War I, came under British mandate after that war. The Golan Heights were part of Palestine. Israel's current borders are the result of the 1948

War of Independence, in which six Arab armies invaded the new-born state, but were utterly defeated, and the 1967 Six-Day War, in which those same armies once again invaded Israel. In that war, Israel conquered the Gaza Strip, the vast Sinai Peninsula, and the Golan Heights. And Israel also *repossessed* the provinces of Judea/Sumaria, (the "West Bank"), and the eastern part of Jerusalem, which had been occupied by the Jordanians nineteen years earlier, when they invaded

the just new-born Jewish state. In order to achieve peace with Egypt, Israel returned to it all of the Sinai. Israel is and has always been prepared to grant full autonomy to the Arabs living in Judea/Sumaria. It is clear to all knowledgeable in military matters that, for immutable strategic reason, Israel cannot for any foreseeable future abandon or yield military control of Judea/Sumaria (the "West Bank") and of the Golan Heights.

The Myth of Greater Israel. Israel is one of the smallest countries in the world. Most people don't realize how small it really is. One wonders whether those who keep talking about "Greater Israel" and who wish to pressure Israel to divest itself of a big chunk of its territory are aware of it. A look at the map is revealing. Including the



Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights, the entire area of the country is barely over 10,000 square miles. France is twenty times as large as Israel, California fifteen times as large, Syria about seven times as large, and "tiny" Ecuador ten times as large. Israel is so small that its area is less than half the size of San Bernardino County, California; if it were dropped into Lake Michigan it would disappear from sight without a trace. The Arab countries in contrast are huge—they occupy twice the area of the United States. Greater Israel, indeed!

It is clear that the concept of "Greater Israel," lacks any validity and has no basis in fact. To apply such a concept to a country as small as Israel would almost seem a mockery. Obviously, Israel has no territorial ambitions. All it wants is to live in peace within secure and defensible borders, just as any other country and as required under U.N. Resolution No. 242. But it seems that the size of Israel, whether "greater" or "lesser" is not at all the concern of Israel's implacable Arab enemies. The very existence of Israel, of a Jewish state in their midst of whatever size, is unacceptable to the Arabs. And unless that mindset changes, not until the Arab states have become democracies and have come to full acceptance of Israel, are willing to make *true* peace with it, and are prepared to establish normal and friendly relations with Israel can any possible territorial adjustment be considered. As it looks right now, that may still take some time.

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Bulgarian horrors perhaps the greatest.”

By 1880 Gladstone had once more swept to electoral victory, to the rage of the Queen. Her mind had by now been disgracefully poisoned against him by Disraeli, and she wrote to her private secretary in her inimitable epistolary style, “She will sooner *abdicate* than send for or have any *communication* with that *half mad firebrand* who wd soon ruin everything & be a *Dictator*. Others but herself *may submit* to his democratic rule but *not the Queen*.” As it happened, she didn’t abdicate, but she had revenge of a sort. Gladstone’s second government was much less happy than his first, and began to unravel almost before it began. The artificial coalition of patrician Whigs and plebeian radicals could in any case not have been held together forever, but Gladstone’s ineptitude in personal relations didn’t help. It was quite a feat, as Jenkins says, to drive the Whig Lord Hartington and the radical Joseph Chamberlain out of the party and into each other’s arms.

IN contrast to his first, Gladstone’s second government was beset by difficulties, few of which showed him at his best. Gladstonian Liberalism was—or should have been—inimical to imperialism, but the British Empire was expanding under its own momentum, and Gladstone was landed with problems from South Africa to Afghanistan. He gravely damaged his reputation among pacifists and anti-imperialists by his attack on Egypt in 1882, and was then execrated from the other side by jingoists (which sense of the word had just been coined) when the adventurer General Charles George Gordon was sent to the Sudan and was killed at Khartoum before he could be rescued from a predicament of his own making.

One startling aspect of that story was Gladstone’s heavy personal investment in Egyptian stock. It looks on the face of it “a clear case of improper financial interest,” Jenkins writes. By modern standards and with modern press attention, without even intrusive investigation . . . his position would have been wholly untenable.” But Jenkins goes on to say that he does “not believe for a moment that his primary or even his significantly supporting motivation sprang from financial self-interest.” This may seem naive; I

am sure it is correct, and that Jenkins is right to say that “Gladstone’s blend of innocence and grandeur transcended the possibility of corruption.”

With all those woes it isn’t surprising that Gladstone’s second government was so barren of creative achievement—with all those and with Ireland, the question that infected politics and then shattered the Liberal Party less than thirty years after its birth. Into the 1870s Gladstone still suffered from the prevailing English delusion that Irish grievances could be cured by kindness, and that there was nothing to them but religious or economic discontent. This belief was dented by continuing agrarian violence, and by the swelling number of Irish Home Rulers returned to Parliament, now under the formidable leadership of Charles Stewart Parnell.

Each central decade of Gladstone’s career had a dominating personal relationship: partnership, rivalry, or something between. It was Peel in the 1840s, Aberdeen in the 1850s, Palmerston in the 1860s, and Disraeli in the 1870s. In the 1880s it was Parnell. He first mastered the arts of filibustering and parliamentary obstruction and then, with “the eighty-six of ‘eighty-six”—the solid, disciplined phalanx of Irish Nationalist MPs who entered the Commons that year—was able to exert real power. They were returned to Parliament thanks partly to Gladstone’s Third Reform Bill of 1884, which greatly extended the franchise and for the first time treated Ireland and Great Britain on equal terms, thus increasing the Irish electorate by 230 percent. Irish votes brought down Gladstone’s second government in June of 1885, to be replaced by the Conservatives under Lord Salisbury.

By now Gladstone had at last made up his mind that Home Rule was necessary. He was intellectually and morally convinced, as Peel had been over the Corn Laws. He saw that Irish resistance and the English reaction to it were “corrupting the whole polity,” in Jenkins’s words: “the maintenance of the liberal state was incompatible with holding within its centralized grip a large disaffected community of settled mind.” (Irish nationalists may note that this would apply equally to a “united Ireland” that tried to hold a million disaffected Ulster Protestants within its grip.) He hoped that Home Rule

might even be carried by the Tories, the “wrong” party taking a historically essential step, for which there had been precedents in England in his lifetime—Catholic emancipation in 1829, repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846.

But once Gladstone’s conversion became known, Tory suspicion and hatred of him only increased, and the Tories settled down for a generation of sterile opposition to Irish self-rule. The rest is history, and tragedy. Salisbury’s government lasted only a few months. In February of 1886 Gladstone formed a third government, now with Parnell’s support. In March the Home Rule Bill was presented to the Cabinet, and Joseph Chamberlain resigned. In April, Gladstone introduced the bill in the Commons with a magnificent three-and-a-half-hour speech. In June the bill was defeated in the Commons, nearly a hundred Liberals voting against; they were shortly to defect from the party as “Liberal Unionists.”

Although Gladstone lost the subsequent general election heavily, he returned to form a last government in 1892. Despite the fall and death of Parnell (that Greek tragedy all of its own), he introduced the Second Home Rule Bill in 1893. This time it passed in the Commons but was defeated by the House of Lords, giving notice that no Irish settlement was possible until the power of the Lords was curbed—as it was eventually, in 1911. Six months after the defeat of the bill Gladstone resigned forever, having returned to office only with deep apprehension: “The heaviest weight I can well be called to bear. But all is with God. His blessed will be done.”

For all the ferocity of party strife and for all the personal animosity he aroused, few could withhold admiration from this heroic octogenarian as he steered the bill through largely single-handedly, with one grand speech after another. “In different parts of the House,” Jenkins writes, “even among his bitterest opponents, there was a sense of witnessing a magnificent last performance by a unique creature, the like of whom would never be seen again.” One evening in the Commons during that magnificent performance a Liberal Unionist was stopped by one of the most bitter opponents, the choleric Lord Randolph

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Churchill. "And that is the man you deserted," Lord Randolph said. "How could you do it?"

THE many biographies of this great man began with the official life, one of the very best of its kind, published soon after Gladstone's death by John Morley, the younger colleague to whom he was closest. The best scholarly treatment of Gladstone's life is the series of introductions by H.C.G. Matthew to the superb fourteen-volume Oxford University Press edition of *The Gladstone Diaries* (the introductions can be bought separately in two volumes). The *Diaries* make endlessly fascinating reading, not for literary quality but for the portrait of the man who kept them. They are his life's justification, kept for the final judgment in which he so passionately believed, an account book of how he had used the days granted him on earth.

This latest biography of Gladstone is very readable and well judged. Roy Jenkins's advantages as a biographer are less scholarly or stylistic than personal. If his career hasn't been quite as extraordinary as Gladstone's (whose has?), it has been remarkable enough. Now seventy-six, he was at Oxford at the end of the 1930s in a generation that produced two Prime Ministers, Harold Wilson and Edward Heath. After wartime army service he entered the House of Commons as a Labour MP in 1948 and stayed there through 1976. In the 1964-1970 Wilson government he became Home Secretary and then Chancellor of the Exchequer. In the former post he helped to liberalize the laws on homosexuality, abortion, and divorce, for which he is still praised or blamed; in the latter he had a record of truly Gladstonian financial rectitude and is still blamed or praised for losing the 1970 election by refusing to buy votes with tax cuts or inflationary spending.

Many people (including, no doubt, Jenkins himself) saw him following further in Gladstone's footsteps to 10 Downing Street. But in the 1970s, a period in British politics as turbulent as the 1840s or the 1880s, he was a victim of the bitter dissension over membership in the European Community and of Labour's self-destructive faction fighting. After another two years as Home Secretary, the strongly pro-European Jenkins departed Westminster for Brus-

sels and served as president of the European Commission from 1977 to 1981. He then returned home to British politics and helped to found the Social Democratic Party, which in the early 1980s gave the illusory impression that it might replace Labour as the main party opposed to the Tories.

Lord Jenkins of Hillhead (as he has been since 1987, the year he also became chancellor of Oxford, elected by the alumni) thus has that knowledge of real life and the great world that book-learned academic historians so often lack. In a parallel literary career he has written a number of books, among them biographies of Sir Charles Dilke and H. H. Asquith. He is naturally good on the texture of political life: the fact that Parliament used to meet for less of the year, from February to August, though when it did meet, it sat strenuously, from the afternoon into the small hours; or the mid-Victorian practice, which seems surprising since the arrival of "the weekend," of holding Cabinet meetings on Saturday.

Queen Victoria once regretted that Gladstone was "not a man of the world." In Roy Jenkins's view, this was "an unattractive catchphrase which she had picked up from Disraeli"; it is not one that will ever be applied to Jenkins. He is a man of the world to a degree that has attracted not always good-natured mockery, the son of a Welsh miner who has fashioned himself into the Last Whig, sophisticated and sybaritic.

IF a recent BBC television documentary is to be believed, Jenkins is no stranger, either, to the pleasures of female companionship. Perhaps for this reason he is better than any previous biographer on Gladstone's sexual personality and the most notorious aspect of his life—his "rescue work" among London prostitutes. Even now it almost beggars belief that, before and while he was Prime Minister, the greatest statesman of his age should have spent his evenings picking up whores, going back to their rooms, and trying to persuade them to give up their way of life. There are different ways of looking at this. A cynical view, long advanced in scurrilous whippers, is that the "rescue work" was no more than a pretext and that Gladstone had reasons both base and obvious for his encounters with these ladies of the

night. An alternative and elevated view holds that it was genuinely charitable work, nobler indeed than looking after other victims or outcasts because of the courage it required. In the words of an earlier biographer, Philip Magnus, Gladstone "found a priestly office which he could fulfil as a layman, and in which his duty to God and man could be discharged together."

As Jenkins says, this lofty interpretation is impossible to sustain after the publication of Gladstone's *Diaries*. These make it clear that he was highly sexed, or even sex-obsessed. There is no reason to doubt his claim at the end of his life that he had never been in the strict sense unfaithful to his admirable wife, Catherine, and there is no doubting, either, that his motives for rescue work were, in part, sincere by his lights. If he thought that prostitution was the epitome of woman's degradation and exploitation by man, was he wrong? But there is also no denying the strong erotic overtones to his meetings with these fallen women, especially since the *Diaries* also detail his guilt-ridden dab-

bling in pornography (which is to say mildly spicy French novels of the kind booksellers used to class as *facetiae*) and his occasional habit of self-flagellation, scourgings marked in the *Diaries* by the sign of a little whip.

As a young man, he was intolerably priggish about women: "It seems to me that female society, whatever the disadvantages may be, has just & manifold uses attendant upon it in turning the mind away from some of its most dangerous & degrading temptations." Later on, streetwalkers apart, he developed a penchant for friendships with women of a higher class but still of dubious repute, like the attractive Laura Thistlethwayte. She was the daughter of one minor country gentleman and married to another, but she was not "received in society," as Lord Derby put it, because it was known that in her youth she had been an expensive kept woman. Gladstone was plainly infatuated: he visited her—the occasion of Derby's astonishment—and wrote to her often.

All of which was relevant to the great drama of 1890–1891: the fall of Parnell

after his long liaison with Katherine O'Shea was revealed. The episode brought out the worst and the best in Gladstone. Whatever Irish romantics from Yeats onward may have said, the truth was that once Parnell had been dragged through the divorce courts as the apparently duplicitous lover of another man's wife, he could not possibly have continued to lead the national party of the most puritanically Catholic country on earth, especially since that party depended on the support of equally puritanical English and Scottish Protestants. But Gladstone made matters worse by clumsily seeming to instruct the Irish party to depose their leader.

In private it was another story. As Jenkins well puts it,

Gladstone could often be self-righteous and sometimes priggish, but he was not a hypocrite, and he had seen too much of life and enjoyed the company of too many women whose virtue was not perfect for a straightforward even if long-standing case of adultery to cause him moral revulsion.



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Nor did it. "What," he said to a colleague, "because a man is called leader of a party, does that constitute him a censor and a judge of faith and morals? I will not accept it. It would make life intolerable"—a wise saying that some of our own neo-Puritans could bear in mind. And despite the violent words they had sometimes exchanged, Gladstone was most generous to Parnell's memory after his death: "A marvellous man, a terrible fall."

That verdict was given in 1897, the year before his own death, at the age of eighty-eight. The best verdicts on Gladstone came from contemporaries in his lifetime. He himself could be an unsparing self-critic. Rereading some of his letters to a friend when they were to be used by a biographer, he wrote, "They are curiously illustrative of a peculiar and second-rate nature." The excellent Catherine was almost as sharp. "Oh, William dear, if you weren't such a great man you would

be a terrible bore," she once said with affectionate exasperation. He was not in truth a bore, though in his own perceptive words he was someone whose "manner tends to turn every conversation into a debate." And even if his writings aren't as readable as Disraeli's novels, or his speeches as compelling as Abraham Lincoln's, he was anything but second-rate.

The best of all verdicts came in 1877. Gladstone was staying at the country house of the Liberal MP Sir John Lubbock, where the other guests included John Morley and the biologist T. H. Huxley. While Gladstone was at church, the two skeptics stayed behind and talked about him. Why, Huxley said to Morley, "put him in the middle of a moor, with nothing in the world but his shirt, and you could not prevent him from being anything he liked." After reading this enthralling biography, can anyone doubt that Huxley was right? ☘

BRIEF REVIEWS



Herman Melville

by Hershel Parker.

Johns Hopkins, 962 pages,
\$39.95.

This first volume of Professor Parker's biography of Melville ends in 1851, when the author presented to his revered friend Nathaniel Hawthorne an inscribed pre-publication copy of *Moby-Dick*. "Take it all in all, this was the happiest day of Melville's life." Professor Parker occasionally indulges in such *ex cathedra* certainties, but take it all in all, he is a sound, sensible biographer and so thorough that he will probably be accused of monumentality—translation: unnecessary detail, such as which cousins attended whose wedding. The charge is not deserved. The detail matters. Herman was the second son of Allan Melville and Maria Gansevoort. The Boston-based Melvilles had tenuous connections with

Scottish nobility. The Gansevoorts were solidly entrenched among the patroon families of old New York. Both of Herman's grandfathers had served with distinction in the Revolution. These were capable, prosperous, socially secure people. Allan Melville, however, died relatively young, leaving his large family with some fine furniture and a pile of fecklessly incurred debts. The surviving relatives had no intention of paying those debts if it could possibly be avoided, and to that end kinsmen on one occasion sued each other. Going to sea was a standard possibility for a young man with reasonably good health, an inadequate education, and no money. Melville went a-whaling, jumped ship on a cannibal isle, made his way home, and wrote *Typee*. It was a notable, and provocative, success. He continued to write. The women of the family also wrote. They were industrious and lively letter writers

and habitual letter keepers. Professor Parker has had a vast amount of material to work with and has made good use of it. His life of Melville, which hurried readers may find overinclusive, becomes a history of manners, amusements, business methods, politics, American whaling and international maneuverings in the South Seas, literary cliques, publishing practices, copyright law, and the erratic eccentricities of reviewers. When possible—and it frequently is—such information is presented with sly, deadpan humor. Melville emerges from this background as a man living and working in a real world full of real, amusing, brilliant, and sometimes rascally people. Well-chosen quotations establish that Melville himself was a charmer, a grand yarn-spinner, a wild driver, and a man who could describe a winter gale in the Berkshires as indicating “too much sail on the house” and a need to “go on the roof & rig in the chimney.” He was also, of course, a serious writer, steadily expanding his range and his thinking, and on the way to becoming the great writer who deserves all of Professor Parker’s admirable work and all of a reader’s attention.

The Fallen Man

by Tony Hillerman.
HarperCollins,
294 pages, \$24.00.

Acting Lieutenant Jim Chee is not comfortable with the paperwork required by his promotion, and Joe Leaphorn is bored with his recent retirement. A skeleton found by accident brings these edgily allied veterans of the Navajo Tribal Police into action and provides the reader with another of Mr. Hillerman’s elegantly plotted puzzles. As usual, the tale includes evocations of splendid scenery and sympathetic respect for the Navajo nation.

Natural Worlds

by Robert Bateman and Rick Archbold.
Simon & Schuster/Madison Press,
192 pages, \$60.00.

Mr. Bateman is a superb painter of the animals that he loves and of the natural world that they inhabit. His affection and admiration fairly leap out of his depictions of puffins and polar bears, lions and loons. He fears for the future of all

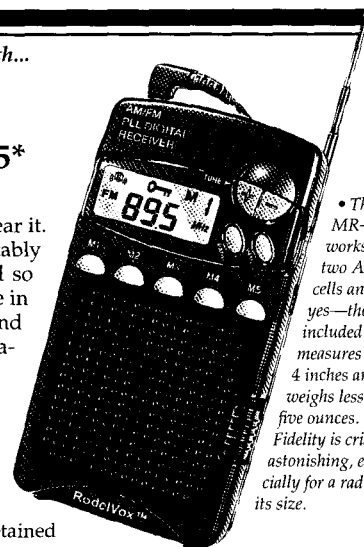
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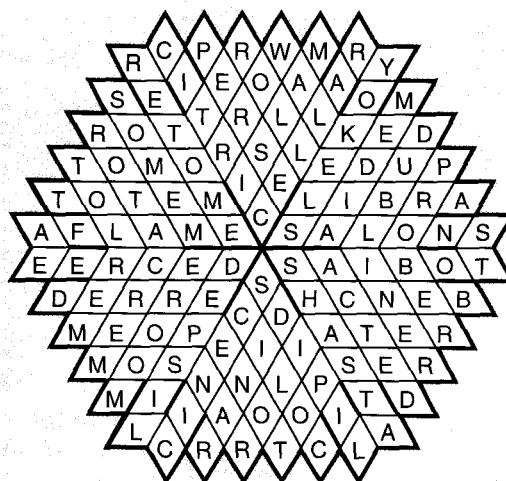
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ANSWERS TO THE DECEMBER PUZZLER



“Snowflake”

Shaded cells spell CRYSTAL CLEAR. 1-12. CITRIC (anag.); SA(LO)NS 2-11. PER SE (double def.); LI(B)RA 3-10. (g)RO(LE)DUP (dell rev.) 4-9. WALKED (hidden periph.) 7-18. YOKE(L)S; SHASTA (anag.) 8-17. MEDIA (double def.); A + C(TE)D (ET rev.) 9-16. DUB + LINER 10-15. P(ROBE)R 13-24. TO + BIAS; SCENIC (see + nick homophone) 14-23. BEN + CH; DI + NAR (rev.) 15-22. RETAIL + OR 16-21. RES(PO)T 19-30. LIP + I(D)S; DE-CREE (pun) 20-29. C(OL)C (oil anag.); ER + RED 21-28. T(ONE) POEM (tempo anag.) 22-27. RANSOM (anag.) 25-36. LI(SP)ED; E(MOTE)R 26-35. MOORE (homophone); M + EMOS (rev.) 27-34. MER(CA)TOR (tremor anag.) 28-33. MER + LOT 31-6. AF + LAME; CELLAR (homophone) 32-5. TOT + EM; IS + LAM 33-4. TOMO(R)ROW (two-room anag.) 34-3. (t)ROTTER

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Robin taught English in Kuwait, Singapore and Turkey, and traveled in Austria, Bahrain, Belgium, Denmark, England, France, Germany, Greece, India, Indonesia, and 8 other countries.

Michael taught English in Brazil, Ecuador, Germany and Guatemala, and traveled in Argentina, Austria, Belize, Bolivia, Chile, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Honduras, Italy, Mexico, the Netherlands, Paraguay, Portugal and Spain.

Shawn worked in Germany, and traveled in Austria, Canada, England, France, Italy, Liechtenstein, Mexico, the Netherlands and Switzerland.

Neville worked in Denmark, England, France and Malawi, and traveled in Australia, Belgium, Ethiopia, Germany, Jamaica, Kenya, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Spain, Switzerland and Tahiti.

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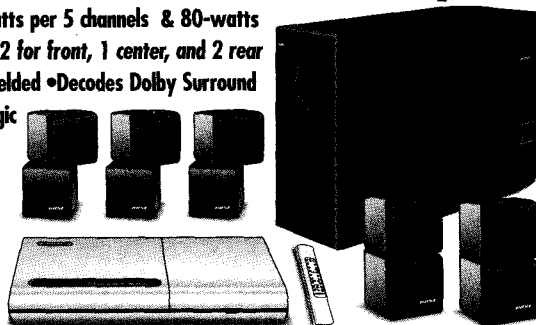


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these fine creatures as human encroachment reduces their habitats and human chauvinism ignores their rights. He "can't imagine anything more complex, varied and beautiful than the planet earth—or anything more worth saving." His subjects support that position.

Paris in the Twentieth Century

by Jules Verne,
translated by Richard Howard.
Random House, 256 pages,
\$21.00.

The young Jules Verne's vision of a future Paris was uncannily accurate in many respects—heavy traffic, crowded housing, elaborate communication systems, and angular women—but he neglected to provide an intriguing plot and his conclusion was pure gloom. His publisher balked, and the text has only now achieved print. It is interesting for the points on which Verne was right, and also for those on which he was wrong. He foresaw a France devoid of political parties.

The Language of the Body: Drawings by Pierre-Paul Prud'hon

by John Elderfield and Robert Gordon.
Abrams, 221 pages, \$75.00.

Pierre-Paul Prud'hon (1758–1823) was a painter and decorator who enjoyed considerable success before withdrawing into collaboration with Constance Mayer. He did less and less painting of his own but spent a great deal of time on what was usually considered student practice—chalk studies of nudes. Prud'hon was a masterly draftsman, and the drawings (*académies*) reproduced in this generously illustrated book are impressive. They are also a bit strange. The female nudes are graceful nymphs doing nothing in particular. The male nudes, in contrast, are usually actively posed and frequently display girlishly pretty heads incongruously attached to heavily muscled adult bodies. Mr. Elderfield's text never truly accounts for this sexual disparity, but he makes a brave attempt at it, and the drawings can easily and happily be enjoyed for their own sake.

—Phoebe-Lou Adams



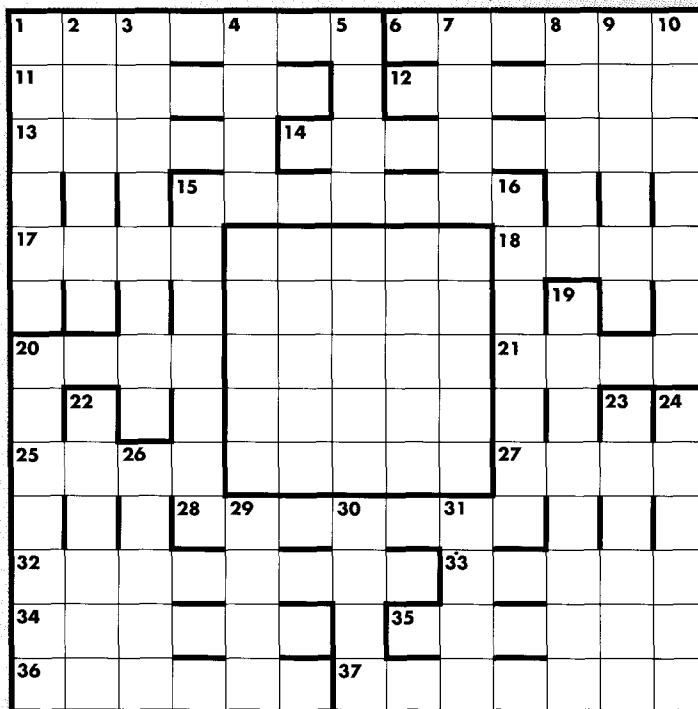
THE PUZZLER

by Emily Cox and Henry Rathvon

Word Square

This month's puzzle is for lovers of squares. First you need to solve the outer portion of the diagram, which contains words clued and entered normally. Next you'll find that the inner portion is a "word square," in which the five Across entries are the same as the five Down entries. Cryptic clues to four of these five words (listed a–d in no special order) are formed by designated entries from the outer diagram. As a finishing touch you must deduce the fifth word, which appropriately names the completely filled inner square. In all, answers include twelve capitalized words.

The solution to last month's Puzzler appears on page 97.



Across

1. Cartoonist returned official property owned by a lord (7)
6. Sherpa changing expression (6)
11. Turned TV knob with nickel set ornamentally (6)
12. Married perennial boss (6)
13. Burns fuel—about two liters (5)
14. Member of the opposition left with tragic Greek woman (8)
15. Getting high, depression is ended (7)
17. Feminine name in *Vogue* and *Self* (4)
18. It's a Byzantine Italian city (4)
20. "Beat" work—chic (4)
21. Vocally chase off dog protector (4)
25. After commencement, prepare for fall (4)
27. Swindle involving one piece of change (4)
28. Antelope in front of brown well, behind stones (7)

32. Cut the price of frilly fabric? (8)
33. Title article "Island Sheikdom" (5)
34. Go by the Spanish cathedral area (6)
35. Republican tucked into bloke's bedclothes (6)
36. Menace Democrat with wrath (6)
37. Rock forward, keeping vow (7)

Down

1. Hot temperature maintained by fruit in rows (6)
2. English flipped over Latin charm (6)
3. Utter poor are a nuisance to state (8)
4. Section of wharf is hiding troll, perhaps (4)
5. Solitary river going west in Western vacation spot (4)
7. Crone embraces one former Secretary of State (4)
8. Jots answer intended for manuscript (5)
9. Bats seen at upper house (6)
10. Recluse spider's relative found behind

this place in London's East End (7)

15. Upsetting practice at a restaurant (7)
16. Ottoman partakes of punch (7)
19. Pounded pellet into red-hot plastic (8)
20. Ran after Battle sang (7)
22. Hack affecting the style of occultism (6)
23. Singing barber in card game taking in one grand (6)
24. Awfully silent volunteer (6)
26. Old Peruvian jailed? (5)
29. Gaelic poetry volume missing (4)
30. Walk dogs and such on the way back (4)
31. Ring of gold in French bouquet (4)

Word Square

- a. 23 Down + 12 Across + 35 Across + 31 Down
- b. 36 Across + 15 Across + 3 Down
- c. 32 Across + 9 Down + 20 Across
- d. "21 Across" + 35 Across + 1 Down

Note: The instructions above are for this month's puzzle only. It is assumed that you know how to decipher clues. For a complete introduction to clue-solving, send an addressed, stamped long envelope to The Atlantic Puzzler, 77 N. Washington Street, Boston, Mass. 02114.

WORD COURT

by Barbara Wallraff

During the course of the holiday season visiting relatives took issue with my family's use of the word *done* instead of *finished* to indicate the completion of a task. For example, at



dinnertime my children would announce "I'm done" and ask to be excused. My aunts insist that "I'm finished" is the appropriate phrase. Is this just a matter of taste? Is finished preferred only in the context of eating a meal? Aren't *done* and *finished* grammatically equivalent? Can I never be done with the dishes? Please help!

Elizabeth Markiewicz
Boxborough, Mass.

Theodore M. Bernstein, in his *The Careful Writer*, published in 1965, asserted that the headline "Ecuador Rail Line Done" illustrated "an improper, casual use of *done*," and at the time, his point of view was not unusual. But a slim majority of the usage panel for the first edition of *The American Heritage Dictionary*, which appeared four years later, did not object to the word even in an official-sounding context, and the current edition of the dictionary simply presents "finished" as one of the meanings of *done*, treating the matter as settled. The Boy Scouts, certainly, draw no distinction between *done* and *finished*: their lyrics for "Taps" begin, "Day is done, gone the sun"—and perhaps they are paraphrasing Shakespeare, who wrote, "The bright day is done, / And we are for the dark." Nowadays the distinction between the two words is observed more by aunts and grandmothers than by grammarians.



A major corporation I own stock in sends its financial statements out titled "First [or Second, etc.] Quarterly Report." The *ly* sounds wrong. Am I right?

Dale Harber
Yoder, Ind.

Yes, you are. If the intention really were to indicate which report this one is in a sequence, a corporation that is, say, ten years old should be issuing its "Fortieth Quarterly Report." But the idea is that the report covers the first quarter of the year. One says that just the way one says weather report, book report, and traffic report: *First-Quarter Report*.

For years now I have noticed that commentators and columnists employ what seems to be a contradictory usage of *bode*. They say that something "bodes ill," as in "A poor showing in the Alps bodes ill for a Tour de France victory," using *bode* (correctly, I believe) as a transitive verb with the noun object ill; yet when things are looking up, these same pundits state that an event bodes well, as in "The many favorable reviews bode well for the film's Oscar chances." If something is said to bode ill, shouldn't a reversal of fortune lead us to say it bodes good?

William E. Kennedy
San Francisco, Calif.

Although your logic and your knowledge of the way parts of speech function are impeccable, speakers and writers since Dryden, in 1700, have used *bodes well*.

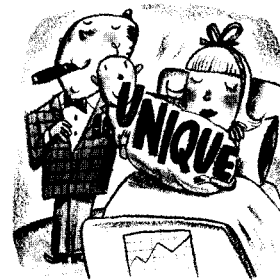
Well, an ancient word, can be grammatically slippery: for example, how would you parse "Leave well enough alone"? All this, I admit, could just as well be used to explain why *bodes well* is considered a forgivable mistake. It is, however, considered cor-

rect. As scrupulous dictionaries indicate, an exception has been made for *well* to the otherwise reliable rule that *bode* (roughly speaking, a synonym for *foretell*) is transitive and therefore must lead into a noun.

Am I correct in deploring the use of a modifier or qualifier preceding the word *unique*, which is heard every day on radio? The common expression is very unique.

Gus Carlgren
Pittsburgh, Pa.

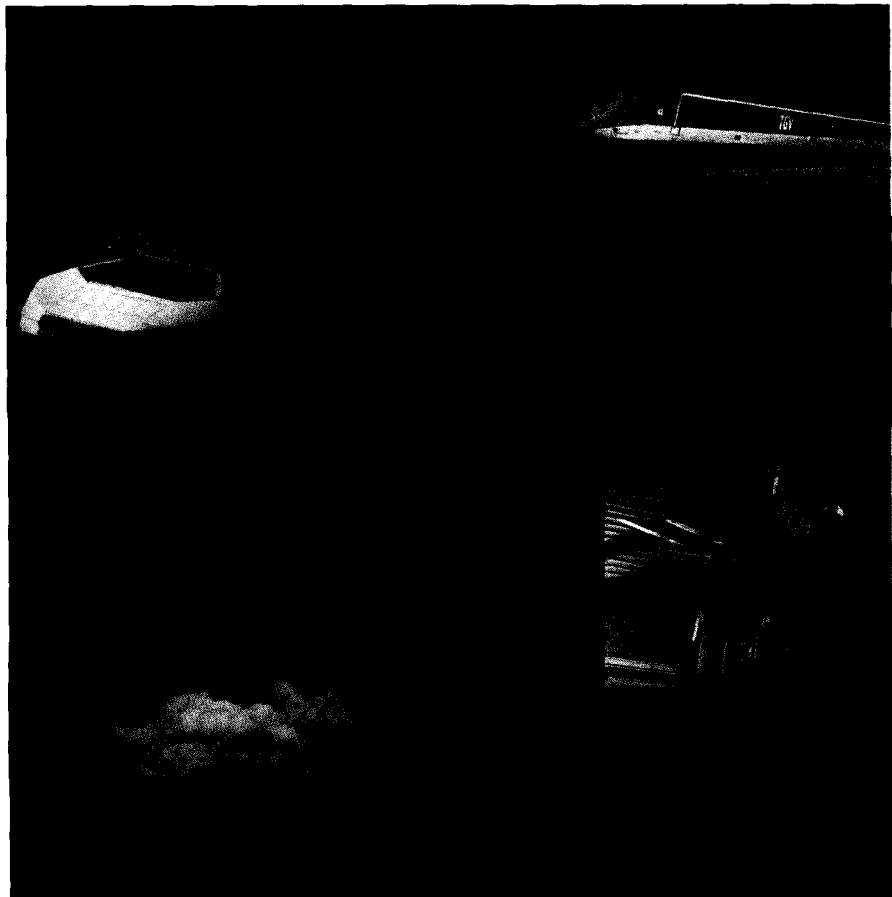
Unique has traditionally belonged to the group of adjectives called absolute or incomparable—meaning that the quality the word refers to must, logically, be either fully present or altogether absent, with no gradations possible in between. One can't, for example, be just a little bit bankrupt, or a little bit anonymous or pregnant or dead. Quite a few people, though, seem not to have gotten the news that *unique* numbers among this rarefied company. And so someone reading or hearing *unique* can no longer assume that it was intended to mean "one of a kind"; maybe the writer or speaker just meant "unusual." This is too bad, because *extraordinary* and *exceptional* and *rare* and *curious* and *unwonted* and *strange* and *peculiar* and *abnormal*, and other words as well, in their various ways all mean "unusual," but *unique*, in its true meaning and in the contexts natural to it, is very nearly unique.



Have you recently had a language dispute that you would like this column to resolve? Write to Word Court in care of *The Atlantic Monthly*, 77 North Washington Street, Boston, MA 02114, or send E-mail to MsGrammar@TheAtlantic.com. All letters become the property of Word Court.

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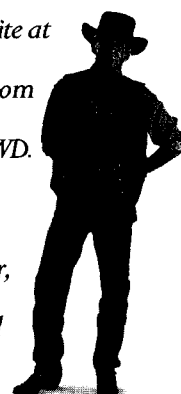
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